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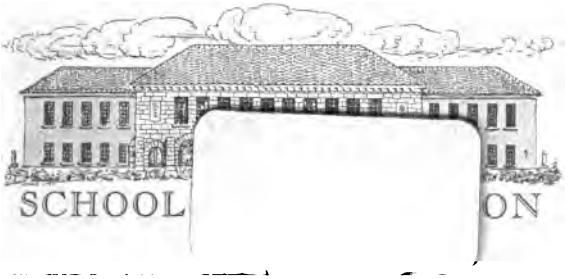
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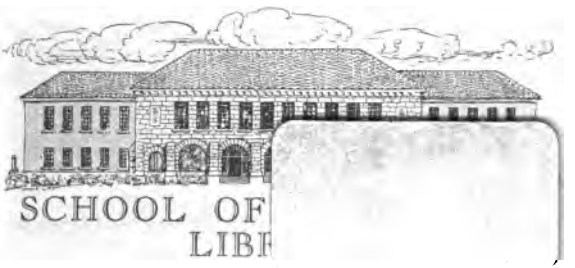

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# WHEN I WAS A BOY IN NORWAY

By

DR. J. O. HALL

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When I Was a Boy In Norway

Printed in U. S. A.

*To my*
*DEAR WIFE,*
*and our beloved daughter,*
*EVANGELINE ORA,*
*this volume*
*is affectionately dedicated*

"For he who knows a book to read
May travel lightly without steed
And find sweet comfort on the road.
He shall forget the rugged way,
Nor sigh for kindly company,
Nor faint beneath his load."

# FOREWORD

CUSTOMS in Norway vary much in the different sections and valleys. What is customary in one valley may be strange or even unknown in another.

This will be easily understood when we remember that the people in the solitary parishes have had little intercommunion and that each parish has clung to its own traditions and customs. With this in view, I have had the choice of either presenting that which is true of a small section or parish, or that which is more generally true for the whole country. Thinking that the majority of the readers are more interested in gaining a correct knowledge of the whole country of Norway than of a small section thereof, I have in this volume presented that which is typical for the nation rather than that

which is typical for even the parish in which I was born. This has also given me the opportunity to quote authors outside of Norway when the country and its people have been praised very highly.

As a modest son of Norway, I have selected this method of presentation rather than to give in all instances my own eulogy of "Mother Norway" and her people.

J. O. HALL.

*Washington, D. C.,*
*May, 1921.*

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PEASANT WEDDING, NORWAY.
As they return from the church, the salute is fired, the fiddler is playing, and the home-brewed ale is passed around.

READY FOR THE CLIMB.

Rosheim, the last station on the ascent to Norway's highest mountain peak, Galdhepiggen (8399 feet)

# WHEN I WAS A BOY IN NORWAY

## CHAPTER I

### SUNLIT NORWAY, NATURE'S WONDERLAND

I AM thankful that I had the opportunity of being "A Boy in Norway;"—but I am also grateful to "Uncle Sam" for adopting me as an American citizen.

Hence, Norway is my mother, who gave me my gentle training for twenty years, and "Uncle Sam" is my father, who has given me great opportunities for education and travel, and has enabled me to meet with the people in the different States and learn a great deal of the past and present of this glorious country.

In this book I am obliged to speak of my "mother" only, and of such a good and beautiful mother I must of necessity say nice things.

Therefore, if you find me calling her pet names, you must never think that I have lost my affection for my "father"; but as a loyal, devoted child I can love them both.

The Irishman said, "Every one ought to be patriotic about his native country,—whether he was born there or not."

As one among many thousands, I can testify to the fact that it is possible to be patriotic—in the best sense of the word—both toward one's *native* and one's *adoptive country.*

And who could help being patriotic for Norway, Nature's Wonderland, the Land of the Vikings, of Saga and Song, of Fjords and Falls, of Mountains and Ice-fields, with a variety of climate, from the mildest tracts in the south to the Arctic winters in the north, and the lure of the Midnight Sun and the Northern Lights?

Surely we can say with the beloved Norse poet, Björnson:

"This North Land is our own,
And we love each rock and stone,
From the rugged old snow mountains
To the cabins by the main;
And our love shall be the seed
To bear the fruit we need."

We could write a big volume on the grand and picturesque scenery of Norway; but there are many excellent books on this subject. You, of course, will be interested in the phenomena and wonders of the land of the Norsemen, and in order to show you the magnificent scenery we shall take you along on delightful holiday tours and rambles in this "New Switzerland." But more interesting than his country is the Norseman himself. We shall, therefore, spend ample time in studying the people, their habits, customs, traditions, folk-lore, and fairy-tales.

We shall study the interesting characteristics of the descendants of those brave and valiant Vikings, who in the days of old, when Europe was degraded by the chains of slavery, governed themselves by

their own laws and planted that spirit of self-ruling and freedom, which she proudly possesses to-day, and which entitles her country to be called the "Freest of the Free."

## What Does this Fairy-land Look Like?

In order to answer this, let us take a bird's-eye view of this country. How can we do it? Just step with me into an airplane. We have an expert pilot, and he will show us the general outline of the land. Afterwards we will take our time and see and learn more at each of the most interesting points.

Supposing our pilot could take us so high that with our excellent instruments we could view the whole country at once. What does it look like? It looks like a giant Greenland whale—about 1,200 miles long. Toward the south is the big head, 250 miles wide, and toward the north is the tail—terminating in North Cape.

Portions of this fish suggest that it has been underfed, as the northern half is only about sixty miles wide.

This giant whale is washed by three oceans. The wintry Arctic in the north, the Atlantic—tempered by the mild Gulf Stream—in the west, and the gentle gales of the Skagerak and Kattegat in the south. On the east side it is safely moored to Sweden for a distance of 950 miles, and in the northern part to Finland for 450 miles, and to Russia for 100 miles.

You will observe that this giant whale is not only dead, but petrified. We can therefore examine it without being disturbed.

Its mighty backbone is the first portion to invite our attention. This is divided into three parts. Langfjeldene (Long-mountains) is the name of the backbone from the head up to the big crossbone, which is called Dovrefjeld (Dovre-mountains). Then the backbone from there to the tail is called Kjölen (The Keel).

This mighty bone sticks up 6,151 feet above the sea, and the large part within the Arctic Circle is covered with immense snow-fields and glaciers. Let us now take a look at the crossbone, the Dovrefjeld, with the highest peaks in Scandinavia—the Glittertind (8,385 feet) and Galdhöpiggen (8,400 feet).

These mighty peaks are the fathers of the mountains. They have thousands of children, and some of these are about as big as their fathers. Each member of the family covers himself with a heavy veil of snow and ice. This veil is also stretched out between them, and thus it covers over five thousand square miles. The veil drops as low as 5,580 feet. This is called the snow-line.

See how these glaciers glitter in the sunlight like an ocean of brilliant diamonds, and from this ocean of perpetual ice we see pale-green streams issue and form magnificently vaulted deep blue caverns.

As our pilot points out and explains this panoramic view, valley after valley and mountain after mountain open their charms to our wondering gaze. Is it real, or is it a fairy-tale in which a wall of rock opens and displays an entrance to the most mysterious and enchanting scenes? It is real, and we stand speechless.

A wondrous sense of sublime ecstasy steals over us—" something sinks into our souls that nothing will ever efface."

According to Norse folk-lore, these vast mountain districts are supposed to be inhabited by many kinds of unnatural folk, who live underground and in the mountains. Some of these are great giants like trolls, and some are small dwarfs, gnomes, and witches. Our pilot is one of the few who can both see and converse with such people. Can you hear him ask one of the witches that is flying around us, " How old are these mountains, and how were they made? " She answers, " They were made during the ice

age, when the ice sheet six to seven thousand feet thick moved all over the country and performed the mighty work of erosion, transportation, and deposition of rock and earthy material. Thus the hills and dales, the mountains and the deep valleys, were made. You also ask how long it is since this happened. That you can figure out yourself by following these rules of my mother. She said that if a cat had ten lives, and he could live fifty years for each of his lives, and his offspring through every generation could live just as long as the first cat, then you would find that exactly one thousand generations of cats have died since these mountains were made."

Having said this, she flies away laughing, as if she thought that we should find it difficult to solve this simple problem.

Now, we observed that these great snow-fields and glaciers are also the parents of innumerable beautiful cascades,

and even though it is midsummer, we notice that the snow hangs like a fringe on every ledge and curtains every slope.

From our airplane we can see something like long, winding, blue ribbons extending from the ocean far into the country all over the western coast of Norway. They are called fjords. The western coast-line is broken up by deep incisions of the sea into the rocky cliffs,—just as if the meat between the ribs of our giant whale had been removed, and the clear green water from the North Sea had filled the openings.

These fjords and the mainland are always protected against the roaring billows without, by a perfect belt of islands, which to the number of 150,000 gird the coast (with but few entirely open stretches), and form the most perfect breakwater from the southeastern frontier right up to the North Cape.

These islands vary in size; but altogether they contain one-fourteenth of the

land surface of Norway and one-eighth of the population.

We shall stop just long enough at the Lofoten chain of isles to listen to the beautiful description of them by a Norse rhapsodist. He says:

"Like needles their snow-capped peaks pierce the sky. During the greater part of the year snow fills the ravines far down the mountain sides, clasping their frosty arms around the valleys, and sending down like streams of tears along the weather-beaten cheeks of these northern Alps innumerable foaming waterfalls and roaring cascades, falling in an endless variety of graceful shapes into the profound fjords below.

"With their lofty jagged pinnacles, fantastic chasms, and rugged precipices, they present a picture of unutterable grandeur."

We shall visit the coast of the Lofoten islands again, because here are the chief cod and herring fishing-grounds of Norway. The pilot told us that during the

fishing season forty thousand fishermen gather here, and the annual yield of fish exceeds two million dollars.

Near the south end of these islands it looked as though the whole ocean were boiling. This is the famous whirlpool known as the *Maelstrom.*

We cannot relate in this chapter all that we have seen from our airplane. In other chapters we shall describe Norway's beautiful spring, her rich autumn colors, the Midnight Sun, when it robes the sea, land, and sky in the wondrous grandeur of an endless summer day, and the matchless beauty and pristine purity of her snowy winters with skiing, skating, and tobogganing.

## CHAPTER II

### THE PEOPLE OF NORWAY

We have taken a brief glance at Norway as a country. Let us now look at the people who are living there.

Their most common names are Ole, Hans, Peder, etc.

If Ole had a son whose given name were Hans, his full name would be Hans Olsen (Ole's son). And if Peder had a daughter named Mary, her full name would be Mary Pedersdatter (Mary Peder's daughter), etc.

Many, especially professional people, take the names from the farms where they were born.

This was the case with my father, whose name was Ole Helle, then Halle, and finally Hall.

In size and complexion, there are two different types of Norsemen. In the

great valleys of the interior, as Osterdalen and Gudbrandsdalen are to be found the most marked physical characteristics of the Norwegians. They are tall of stature, strong of limb, with rather long and narrow heads. Most of them have blue eyes and sixty per cent. have light hair. These belong to the purest Teutonic ethnic stock. Racially they are closely related to the Icelanders, Swedes, Danes, Germans, English, and Flemish. Because so many of these different nationalities have emigrated to America, we find that seventy-five per cent. of the American population belong also to the same Teutonic race.

In the coast section of the country is to be found the second type. These represent more of a race mixture. They are shorter of stature, with broader heads, and a darker complexion.

Personally I belong to the latter type, although I was born in Gudbrandsdalen. In this parish there were very few who,

like myself, had black hair and a dark complexion, and as a boy I heard some old women say that, because I was so different from most of the children in the neighborhood, I would certainly turn out to be either very, very bad or extremely good. To date their prophecy has not come true, as I am neither notoriously bad nor renowned for my goodness.

The Norse anthropologist Arbo says that these coast people are more emotional, loquacious, and susceptible to leadership than the stolid, reserved and independent Teutons of the interior regions.

Among people in America one often hears the expression: "He is a white-headed Swede." In many cases he might be a light-haired Norwegian or Dane; but to *the average American* they are all Swedes. But a Norwegian resents being called a Swede. The reason is that during the early part of the last century, a great many Swedes of the poorer class would go to Norway in order to get em-

ployment. Many of them were rather shiftless, and the saying, "He has made a Swede of himself," became a proverb that was applied to all who showed a lack of business ethics. This is rather unfortunate, because most Swedes are as honorable and as fine a people as you can find in any country.

Many Norwegians enlisted in the Civil War of the United States, and when the troops were measured it was found that the Americans were the tallest, 171.9 cm., with the Norwegians a close second, 171.4 cm., while in breadth of chest the Norwegians excelled all the other nationalities.

The Norwegians are just ordinarily handsome, which is to say they are rather plain people. The women are strong and squarely built, and what beauty they have has not been put on before the mirror. It has required their whole lifetime to acquire it, and therefore it is of the solid, substantial sort which is not washed off by either rain or tears.

The American author, Mr. W. S. Monroe, says:

"Of the two sexes, the men are the better proportioned, both in the matter of figures and features.

"Both men and women have frank and open countenances.

"Their most marked mental characteristics are clear insight, dogged obstinacy, absolute honesty, and a sturdy sense of independence."

The great poet, Björnson (who is as beloved in Norway as Longfellow is in America), has made the following statement concerning his countrymen:

"Opinions are slowly formed and tenaciously held, and much independence is developed by the rigorous isolation of farm from farm, each on its own freehold ground, unannoyed and uncontradicted by any one. The way the people work together in the fields, in the forest, and in their large rooms has given them a characteristic stamp of confidence in each other."

Such solitary and uneventful life amidst a rigid and rough nature makes the Norwegian farmer meditative and of few words, modest and slow—almost phlegmatic,—yet when necessary he is very resourceful and prompt to act.

The two outstanding characteristics among all classes in Norway are *Independence* and *Frankness*.

This independence or dogged perseverance and stolidity he has inherited from the Teutons. But blended with this temperament he has the imaginative qualities and the mysticism of the Celts, and also the peculiar deep sense of primeval sorrow and fatalistic outlook on life, which one finds in the Slav.

The Norse national traits and characteristics are admirably stated by the English author, Hon. Samuel J. Beckett, F. R. P. S., who says:

"This blending of racial temperaments has given the national character an individual charm, directness, and spontane-

ity reflected in its art, literature, music, and national life, and it finds its counterpart in the Norwegian physique. The influence and the subtle relations exerted by the geographical conformation on the mental and spiritual development of a people may be more clearly traced here than in any other country. The rocky character of the soil, the peculiar formation of the coast-line, full of excellent harbors and long navigable arms of the ocean penetrating far into the country, surrounded with narrow strips of arable and pasturable land, inevitably tended to form a strong and hardy race; a nation of warriors, pirates, and merchants—all dependent on the ocean for their livelihood and sustenance. . . . These primitive conditions of life reacted also on the social and religious system, making it prevalently feudal and semi-despotic in character. With regard to the latter, the bellicose and heroic rather than divine characteristics of the Norse gods are very significant and pervade the early sagas, and, indeed, the greater part of primitive Norwegian literature. It satisfied the people's inherent warlike spirit of adventure, and at the same time it conduced to the creation of that subtle spiritual

mysticism which is inseparable from the Norse character; yet it was through these same channels that the country was thrown open to the revolutionary influence of Christianity. . . .

"Any nation might well envy the people of Norway with their upright, manly bearing and their fair complexions and blue eyes. This simple, honest, hospitable, God-fearing people are the modern descendants of those victorious Vikings who ravaged the coasts of Britain and later settled there—bringing with them that love of freedom which these men of the north have ever considered their most cherished possession. The progress which has been made during the last fifty years is nothing short of wonderful; in it is found the national spirit at its best, singularly united and advanced, and producing as fine a race, both physically and intellectually, as is to be found in any country. Their love of country is proverbial, and there are few countries where the singing of the national anthem awakens a deeper or more heart-stirring emotion than the singing of 'Gamle Norge' (Old Norway), one of their older national hymns."

This deep-seated love of freedom has been the outstanding characteristic of the Norsemen in every age. Their character has *never* been marred by the yoke of slavery. From the earliest days to the present the people have been either small landholders, seamen, Vikings, or professional men.

This has developed in them a spirit of independence, which is not found in countries where the majority of the inhabitants have no direct property interest. Norway has no "country gentlemen" as in England. The wealthiest landlord is only a peasant, and he is always a hard worker. They have no leisure class, neither have they any hereditary aristocracy. Just one century ago it was provided that those holding titles might be allowed to retain them during their lives, but they could not transmit them to their children.

The absence of class distinctions makes it possible for any intelligent per-

son in Norway to seek the highest educational and professional positions. Thus we see that the clergy of the country are almost entirely recruited from the ranks of the peasantry.

That the great national university at Christiania is patronized by the children of the humblest farmers you will recognize when we call to your attention the fact that the following leading men were all sons of humble peasants, namely: Jörgen Moe, the renowned bishop and hymn-writer; Ivar Aasen, probably the greatest of Norse linguists; Arne Garborg, the popular author; Vinje, the lyric poet; Svendsen, the music composer; Skrevsrud, the indefatigable missionary to the Santhals; Dahl and Skredsvig the painters, and Skeibrok the sculptor; Thommesen, the gifted editor; Baard Haugland, the financier; Siver Nilsen, the statesman—and many others.

The beloved poet Björnson is most likely correct when he asserts that—"no

other country possesses so many men in official positions—physicians, clergymen, engineers, teachers, and merchants—who are peasant-born, often from the tenant and working classes;" and that "in no other country have so many eminent poets, artists, men of science and statesmen risen directly from the peasantry."

The healthy peasant life gives them the necessary physical stamina for their subsequent arduous life of mental concentration and development.

They can also enjoy the benefits of a splendid school-system, which in turn accounts for the high average of education in Norway.

When we consider the moral traits of the Norseman, we find that foreigners, who have lived among the people long enough to be competent judges, pronounce their moral standard to be excellent.

Honesty is one of their valuable assets as a people.

Their merchants would never think of charging the tourists a higher price than they charge their own countrymen.

The tourists who are accustomed to be overcharged,—especially in the southern part of Europe and in the Orient,—are delighted to find such honesty in Norway.

The American author, Mr. W. S. Monroe, cites this typical incident:

"An Englishman had lost his purse shortly after leaving Vassevangen for Stalheim. Altogether unconscious of his loss, he walked on placidly. Suddenly, hearing hurried footsteps following him, he turned about and faced a lad, who thrust the pocketbook into the owner's palm and disappeared before the Englishman got a coin from his pocket to reward the boy for his honesty. The Norwegian youth very properly did not expect a reward for doing the only thing open to his mind upon finding the purse."

We will let this same author tell you how the Norwegian people treat their beasts of burden. Knowing it to be true,

I quote it, preferring as a modest son of Norway to let others sing our praises:

"No blows, no sore backs, no harsh tones disturb the perfect composure between man and beast. Chiefly this is owing to the good nature and sweet temper of the drivers and horse-owners, but it may be left to speculation how far these qualities here, as in Mohammedan lands, are owing to the absence of public houses and the universal sobriety of the people."

In this connection a New Yorker, who had been traveling in Norway, tells how he made a call on "Jimmie"—a young boy, who had been driving him with his team for about three days:

"We strolled out and visited 'Jimmie' at his cottage. We found him resting, and he took us out to a clover field in which his ponies were grazing. When they saw him coming they left the clover and rushed at him like a pair of Newfoundlands, and rubbed their heads against him. This tribute of affection was well deserved, as we had never seen

such care given to animals; but that is the rule in Norway. We did not see a horse with a sore, or [one] that was lame, or in a poor condition during our whole stay in the country."

## CHAPTER III

### RAMBLES AROUND MY PICTURESQUE BIRTHPLACE

For this ramble we start from Christiania, the capital of Norway, founded in 1624 by Christian IV.

The approach to Christiania by water is famed and extolled. It affords a view of the pretty valley of Aker, broad and fertile, and surrounded by low hills.

This city has changed its character within the last generation, and it is now a modern town with numerous fine buildings.

In the centre of the city the buildings are mostly of marble and granite. On a hill above the handsome University buildings and the fine National Theatre, lies the royal palace surrounded by a large and beautiful park. In the vicinity of the

town are the hotels of Holmenkollen and Voksenkollen, favorite and beautiful places of resort.

In order to reach my birthplace we board a train on Norway's oldest railway. This will take us to Eidsvold, where Norway's constitution was signed on May 17th, 1814. At this place is now an interesting historical museum belonging to the nation. At Eidsvold we take the steamer for Lillehammer over Mjösen, the largest lake in Norway (sixty-one and one-half miles long, one hundred and forty-one square miles in area).

From the steamer we can see large, prosperous farms on both sides of the lake.

We pass the thriving town of Hamar, where we can see the ruins of the cathedral, destroyed in 1567.

After a pleasant ride on this placid lake we arrive at Lillehammer, a town of about 4,000 inhabitants. Lillehammer, being nearer my birthplace than any

other city, was the first town I ever visited.

It has an open-air museum of old Norwegian peasant buildings in which ancient costumes, domestic utensils, and weapons are preserved. The museum is a unique curiosity and exceedingly interesting.

From the Mesna bridge, which connects the northern and southern parts of the town, it is only a few minutes' walk to the Helvedeshöl (hell caldron), a ravine in which there are fine waterfalls.

From Lillehammer we can continue our journey by rail, auto, or by horse and cariole. We select the auto in order to get a good view of the beautiful and fertile valley of Gudbrandsdalen.

Through the entire length of the valley (about one hundred and thirty miles) we follow the course of the broad, rushing river, which adds much to the picturesqueness of the scenes we pass through.

We make short stops at the Hunder-

foss, Tretten, and the church at Ringebu, which existed as early as 1270.

At Hundorp we must also stop. This place seems to have been very important when the primitive Norsemen were worshipping Odin and Thor, for there are several barrows in its neighborhood. A farmhouse called Hundorp is said to have been the seat of Dale Gudbrand, the heathen opponent of St. Olaf. King Olaf traveled through his country in order to convert the people from Odin and Thor and have them accept the Christian religion. But Dale Gudbrand and his peasants brought to the place of interview a great wooden image of the god Thor. King Olaf was delivering a sermon, and just as the sun rose, he pointed to it and said, "Look to the east, there comes our God in great glory." The people turned to look, and this was,—according to former agreement, the time for Olaf's man, Kolbjörn the Strong, to break the idol with his big club. As he did so,

snakes, lizards, and rats as big as cats came out of the image. They had been feasting on the good food which was daily offered to this god. Dale Gudbrand and his people accepted the Christian faith.

At station after station halts are made at places ideally situated from the point of view of any one seeking a lovely valley retreat in which a summer holiday may be spent within sight of the distant snow-capped mountains. On innumerable heights along the line there are excellent hotels and sanatoriums. Several of these are segregated for invalids, who invariably benefit by the pure and bracing air of the mountains, while others are kept open during the whole, or part, of the winter for the accommodation of ski-runners, who find good sport on the slopes of the valley. In the woods on the sides of the mountains much timber is felled in the autumn, and, after being dragged down to the river over the winter snow, is floated down to the coast in summer.

As we continue our journey northward, the large old farms with their immense log buildings are most apparent.

The Englishmen call them gentlemen's houses. One writes:

"Here one need not think of the purely architectural, which however, as at Bjölstad, Sandbu, Björnstad and Tofte, is of great interest. The very position of the principal building on the hill, and its large rooms and broad stairs, show that those who have lived there have been great. It is here, indeed, that the oldest families in the country live; historians have nothing to put forward against the saying that the descendants of the Norwegian mediæval nobility live here. The Gudbrandsdal farmer himself claims to be descended from the founder of the Norwegian kingdom, Harald Haarfagre; and it is a fact that a more aristocratic and finely formed type than these it would be difficult to find anywhere. Here, too, one meets with the fine feeling of the true aristocrat; to receive tourists well is almost less a matter of business than of honor. The old houses that opened their doors to travelers a

hundred years ago, still do so. When strangers came, they were hospitably received; the old Norwegian royal houses opened their doors to them. They were so large that nothing new needed to be built; nor did the valley adopt new customs; for the old were so good, that strangers have ever since been well satisfied with them."

The road through Gudbrandsdalen is excellent, and the landscape is grand both in beauty and variety.

We must stop once more on our way at the historic spot Kringen near Otta. This is the Glencoe of Norway.

There you can see a monument with the following inscription:

*"Here Colonel George Sinclair was shot, August 26th, 1612."*

In that year the great king of Sweden, Gustavus Adolphus, hired foreign mercenaries to ravage Norway's territory. Colonel Sinclair, who came from Scotland, landed at Veblungsnes in Romsdal and proceeded up to Gudbrandsdalen.

Under the leadership of Bailiff Lauritz Gram the brave peasants of Gudbrandsdalen armed themselves as best they could. The peasants from the parishes of Lesje, Vaage, Fron, and Ringebu, gathered at the narrow mountain pass, Kringen, near the river Laugen, to await the arrival of the enemy. The advance guard was allowed to pass; but on the arrival of the main body, with Colonel Sinclair himself, the Norwegians suddenly attacked the Scotchmen. They were surprised by the farmers on the hillside, who rolled logs and boulders down upon them, either killing the Scotchmen with their crude weapons or driving them into the river. The advance guard was then overtaken and killed, with the exception of sixty, who were taken prisoners. These were kept in a barn over night and in the morning they were massacred in cold blood.

Thus the whole Scotch army of nine hundred men was annihilated by three

hundred Norwegian peasants. Not one man, it is said, escaped.

At Kvams Church a grave is still pointed out as being that of Colonel Sinclair.

The farther north we travel in Gudbrandsdalen, the more the landscape assumes the character of a mountain-valley.

Passing Otta and Vaage we arrive at the parish of Lom, where I was born.

This parish is located away up under the snow-line, where the days are so short in the winter that the sun does not find time to rise high enough to show itself; but during the short summer, "Old King Day" seems to make up for lost time, for then it hardly takes time to set. The summer nights in Norway are very beautiful. They are so light that one may sit out-of-doors and read until one or two o'clock in the morning. At this time sunset and sunrise follow close in each other's track, and the short summer in Norway's

vales and mountains slips by as a beautiful dream.

Such were the summers in my picturesque boyhood home in Norway.

There on the hillside is the little farm and the small insignificant buildings of my birthplace. But they are dear to me, because it was my home, where I passed my care-free, happy childhood days.

My home is located at the foot of the wild, snow-covered mountain range, Jötunheim. *Jotun* means giant, and *heim* means home, so here is the *home of the giants*. If they built it according to their own fancy, they certainly must have possessed supernatural skill and power.

In Norse Mythology we are told that Valhalla (the hall where Odin received the souls of all heroes slain in battle), has 540 gates. This is a small number compared to Jotunheim's legionary gates; for Jotunheim forms the greatest and grandest part of a *Highland* 900 miles long.

## CHAPTER IV

### JOTUNHEIM

### *A Peep Into the Home of the Giants*

FAR above the busy life of the valley, there lies an immeasurably wide world, the mountain plateau. Many for whom the life of the valley became too narrow turned their steps thither. The generation to which these belonged is now dead, the old reindeer-hunters and fishermen, who always lived upon the plateau, summer and winter, even when every one else had gone down to the valley. They could live nowhere else, these free men of the plateau, for they felt the attraction of the mountains as no others did. Up there the air is lighter and the view wider. The sun goes late to rest, and tinges the glaciers and snow-peaks with crimson in the glow of evening; and while the valley still lies

in twilight shadow, the mountain plateau shines in the golden radiance of the rising sun. He who does not know the mountain plateau, does not know Norway. It is only when one has looked from one of its peaks over what might be a sea petrified in the midst of a hurricane, that one understands the mysteries that bind the heart to Norway, to the grand beauty of the mountains.

Broken only by a few valleys, the mountain plateau begins at Hardanger in the north, and clothed in its glacier-mantle reaches the rocky wall of the Hallingskarv. North of Valdres lies Jotunheim, north of Gudbrandsal Dovre with Snehaetten (7,613 feet) and Rondane, and finally, north of the Dovre Mountains the peaks of Troldheim. Of these mountain districts, Jotunheim, between Valdres, Gudbrandsdal and Sogn, is the one which possesses the finest, highest mountains and the grandest scenery. Galdhöpiggen (8,400 feet) is the highest European

mountain north of the Carpathians, the Alps and the Pyrenees; it rises from the ice-filled plateau of the Gald summits. East of Galdhöpiggen lies its neighbor, Glittertind (8,377 feet), only a few feet short of it in height, and much more beautiful and more majestic, with its shining white, snow-clad sides glittering in the sun. Without including the highest part of the Jotunheim round the Gald summits, its mountains fall naturally into eight small groups, with heights of between 5,900 and 8,200 feet. In the northwest stand Lomseggen and the Hestbrae crests like a great wall. Toward Sogn there are a series of mountain districts, whose highest points are Skagastölstinderne and Horungerne; and here the Utladal, the wildest of all the ravines of the Jotunheim, runs down to Aardal in Sogn. The most frequented part of the Jotunheim is perhaps that in which lie the three mountain lakes, Gjende (six and one-half square miles, 3,260 feet above

sea-level); Tyin (fourteen and one-half square miles, 3,536 feet above sea-level), and Bygdin (eighteen square miles, 3,483 feet above sea-level), surrounded by snow-mountains. One can stand on the ridge of Besseggen, and look down into Gjende on the one side and Bess Lake on the other.

We might fancy that it was difficult to gain access to this mountain world, and so it was for a long time. Reindeer-hunters, drovers and fishermen reigned alone in the land above the saeters, in the region where no permanent human dwelling is found. Now all is changed. In two days one can reach the Jotunheim through the Gudbrandsal from Christiania. Since 1871, much has been done to make these mountains easily accessible, and the efforts have been exceedingly successful. The traveler can now go everywhere, either with experienced guides or by clearly indicated paths. In many places tourist huts have been

erected, where the benefits of civilization may be enjoyed. Even close to Galdhöpiggen a hut has been built, Gjuvvass Hut, where one can sleep beneath a roof at a height of 6,209 feet above sea-level. The summits, glaciers and lakes of the Jotunheim are now visited during two months of every summer by more tourists than almost any other part of Norway.

But when the short weeks are past, and the strangers have departed, the green lakes and the white glaciers lie there as before. There is nothing now to disturb the great stillness of the plateau, and the loneliness of the desolate moors between the points and peaks of the mountains except a solitary loon screaming before a storm, or a flock of reindeer running swiftly along the side of the mountain. Nature has once more entered into possession of her sanctuary, which, for a brief space of time, she had hospitably opened to mankind.

## CHAPTER V

### FJELDS AND FALLS

My home was surrounded on all sides by steep and rocky mountains, rising into peaks, which were always covered with snow. From these eternal glaciers descended a number of torrents. These formed our big, rough and roaring mountain river, Baevra. This furious, foaming river seemed to contain the white blood of the ice monsters, and yet these glaciers never grew smaller. The reason is that whenever the vapor condensed into rain down in the valley, it would form into snow around those cold mountain giants and the snow would in turn be transformed into ice. The *erosion* under these glaciers would constantly feed the torrents and the great river.

About two miles from my home, this

river, Baevra, formed a roaring waterfall. This constant cataract would sing in different voices according to the weather. Thus, old people could tell by the sound of the cataract what kind of weather there would be. Before snow or rain, the waterfall sang alto; before clear weather it had a high, cheerful tenor; while during the precipitation of either rain or snow it had a deep bass, and in clear weather it sang a mezzo-soprano, without ever getting *off key*.

By this cascade is a small village, Fossberg, and close by is our old church, parsonage and public school.

### *Our Sun-dial*

From our east windows we looked daily across the river at "The Giant's Face," a big black crag, which served as a sun-dial. When the shadow was down to the giant's eyes, it was ten o'clock A. M. and when the shadow had traveled down the length of his nose, it was exactly three

o'clock P. M. "Some nose!" with the rest of the face in proportion.

Among such grandeur in Nature's temple the people became thoughtful and contemplative, for in the voice of vale and streamlet, and in the shadowy language of the engraven rock, they heard the voice of the God of Nature.

## CHAPTER VI

### RETURN OF THE SUN

My home was so shut in by huge mountains that for four months we would never get the direct rays of the sun. Part of that time the sun was not seen at all; but then, as it rose a little higher and the day by small degrees grew longer, we could see the sun light up the tops of the mountains at midday. Then we would watch eagerly how far it would creep down the mountainside from day to day. Finally the rays reached the broad river, Otta, which is running through the valley. But we lived on the shady side of the valley and it would take a few days yet before it would reach our home. Finally we could see the bright reflection on the snow-covered trees in a grove at the lower part of the farm and now the older people

could tell us just how many more days it would take before it would shine down through the big, open chimney and hearth and throw a streak of light on the floor—just for a minute or so. But we would watch eagerly for that minute and be ready to step into the sun-spot, because it meant good luck for the whole year if the sun would shine on you the first day it reached your house again.

From that little mountain home I went out a child, to the first joyful excursions in the great pine and spruce forests and to the higher mountain plateaus with its reindeer and reindeer moss, its mountain torrents, its many glittering lakes full of big fat trout, and its innumerable mountain-peaks covered with perpetual snow. This wonderful, picturesque landscape I learned to love. Its beauty and grandeur surpass my description as much as the reality of yourself, as a person, surpasses your shadow.

How often I used to saunter along the

side of mountain streams, angling for trout, and observe the constant variety of deep and shallow places! Wherever the water is deep, there you have more or less of an eddy, and where it is shallow, there is a ripple. Why is it always so, and what makes the eddies and the ripples?

In the eddy the trout is leaping and splashing, and on the shallow the ripple is laughing and dancing.

## CHAPTER VII

### OUR GAMES AND PLAY

We had a splendid time as children, because Norway is the "Playground of the North." All the summer was spent out in the open air, either herding sheep or goats in the mountains or looking after ponies and cows closer to our home. We also had a good time rowing and fishing.

But the winter sport of skiing, skating, and tobogganing is by far the most exhilarating and enjoyable form of play.

The children in Norway have games very much the same as children in other countries. Of course the girls have dolls and dolls' houses and dolls' tea-parties, like the girls of every land, and there are toys of every description in the shops. The peasant children have to provide their own playthings, and it is wonderful what an amount of amusement they can

get out of cows made from bones, and ships made out of bark. The real enjoyment is to be found, however, in outdoor games, and we had scores and scores of different ones. Many of these games are regular Folk Dances where singing and the "Ring Dance" form an important part. As the name "Ring Dance" implies, the players join hands and dance round in a circle.

Several games seem to be common in most countries;—"Blind Man's Buff," "Hunt the Slipper" and "Forfeits" are found nearly everywhere. Here is the Norse version of "Round and Round the Mulberry Bush," which in some parts is called "Round the Juniper Bush":

"So we go round the juniper bush, the juniper bush, the juniper bush,
So we go round the juniper bush early on Monday morning.
This is the way we wash our clothes, wash our clothes, wash our clothes,
This is the way we wash our clothes early on Monday morning.

"So we go round the juniper bush, the juniper bush, the juniper bush,
So we go round the juniper bush early on Tuesday morning.
This is the way we wring out our clothes, wring out our clothes, wring out our clothes,
This is the way we wring out our clothes early on Tuesday morning."

The washing operations proceed through the next three days of the week, with a verse to each day. Thus on Wednesday they hang up the clothes, on Thursday they mangle them, and on Friday iron them. Then on Saturday they scrub the floor, and on Sunday go to church.

With each verse the children dance hand in hand round the imaginary juniper bush, singing lustily, and illustrating the different actions of the washing operations. Finally, two and two and arm in arm, they promenade around, as if going to church, and generally prolong the walk while they sing the last verse a second time.

The Norwegian children are also fond of playing mock weddings in which the bride wears a crown and they all go in procession to the church where the minister performs the ceremony. Some of the games peculiar to the children in Norway are: "Fire Patrol;" "Weaving of Homespun;" "Last Couple Out;" "The Third Man in the Wind," etc.

Every one is familiar with the game "London Bridge is Falling Down," yet probably few are aware that the words are translated from an old Norse song, and fewer still could tell who broke down the bridge. The story goes that this was accomplished by King Olaf, afterwards known as St. Olaf. He and his Vikings had allied themselves with Ethelred the Unready of England against the Danes, who held the Thames above London Bridge. The bridge itself, which in those days was a rough wooden structure, was densely packed with armed men, prepared to resist the advance of the com-

bined fleets. But Olaf drove his stout ships against it, made them fast to the piers, hoisted all his sails, got out his oars and thus succeeded in upsetting the bridge into the river, thereby securing victory for Ethelred. This took place in Olaf's younger days, while he was yet a Viking, and before he had gained the throne of Norway.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE HERO, FRITHJOF THE VIKING

### (*From Frithjof's Saga*)

THIS is one of my favorite stories as told by my father.

My father, a big, strong, and good-hearted man, was considered the most excellent narrator of stories in the whole parish.

He had traveled and read far more than the average person, and all who knew him considered his memory as phenomenal.

His supply of stories seemed inexhaustible. I can remember as if it were yesterday, how he would take me on his lap and ask what kind of a story I would like to hear.

Young as I was, I was already familiar with many a story of good men and heroic deeds.

The following about Frithjof the Viking was one of the stories that I would ask for very often.

Then my father in a soft, musical voice and in a vivid, masterly manner would tell:

"Well, you remember why Frithjof was called the Viking. Those people in the north who led a wild life of seafaring, adventure, and conquest were called Vikings. In those olden days it was considered glorious to ride the ocean in their long, low boats, built like dragons, and invade and plunder in foreign countries. They had no kingdoms and considered the whole world theirs if they could only conquer it."

Frithjof's father, Thorsten, was King Bele's trusted counselor, and the King's only child, Ingeborg, was Frithjof's girl friend and playmate. They had known and loved each other ever since they could remember, and indeed every one loved Ingeborg.

Although she was the only child and a princess, she was not in the least spoiled, and she could wade a brook or climb a tree almost as well as Frithjof.

They were both fair, with the blue eyes and the yellow hair of the Norse race; but the boy was like a young oak-tree and the girl like a rose.

Ingeborg's hair fell in a shower of ringlets over her straight white frock and even far below the golden girdle. Her eyes were as blue and deep as the sky in spring, and her skin as pure as the petals of a white flower.

The first wild strawberry that he spied in the spring, the first ripe fruit, and the first bear that he killed, all these Frithjof brought home as offerings to Ingeborg. And as they sat together by the fire or in the field, Frithjof told Ingeborg stories of the greatest of all gods, Odin, who lived with the happy gods and goddesses on the fair heights of Valhalla above the clouds, and of the Valkyries, the warrior

maidens, who watched over the battle-fields and carried the dead heroes to Valhalla's halls.

These stories impressed Ingeborg so, that when she sat at her loom in the castle, she tried to weave pictures for Frithjof's stories into her tapestry. But Frithjof, in Ingeborg's absence, wove dreams.

He remembered his father's warning.

"You must not think too much of Ingeborg," Thorsten said. "She is the daughter of a king, and you are only the son of a Viking and have nothing but a life of seafaring to look forward to in manhood. No good can come of your affection for a princess; Thor, the Thunder god, avenges such misplaced love."

But Frithjof said to himself, "Ingeborg is going to be my bride in spite of the great Thor. I shall make myself worthy of her and win her; even if the thunder breaks on my head, nothing shall part us." That was his dream.

So Frithjof grew up to be a brave,

noble young man, and suddenly he found himself in possession of his father's estate, with great wealth in the cellars, garrets, and storerooms. It was a great, beautiful homestead, with hills and valleys and woods stretching for miles each way, and a hundred lakes and streams in which the deer and elk drank. Sheltered pastures fed the great flocks of kine and sheep, and the stables held more than a score of fiery steeds, shod in polished steel and having red ribbons braided in their manes.

But of all that he had inherited, the three greatest treasures were a sword, a bracelet, and a ship.

This sword was so swift and sure that it had been called the brother to the lightning.

The dwarfs had forged and tempered it. This sword had a gold hilt and a blade the steel of which was blue in times of peace, but glowed with the light of a thousand red rubies when there was need for it to do battle in the cause of right.

This weapon was dreaded by every one far and wide through the north.

The bracelet was of purest gold, very broad and large, so that it fitted on Frithjof's brawny arm.

It was said to have been welded by Lame Wouland, the smith of the gods of the north. On it were engraved the twelve immortal mansions of the sky in which the Sun god rested on his journey through the heavens during the twelve months of the year. (This corresponds to the twelve signs of the zodiac.) The clasp of the bracelet was a ruby of enormous size, and whoever wore the bracelet was said to be safe from harm,—even from such danger as the tempest, and the magic spells of trolls and goblins.

But the most valuable of the three treasures was the Viking ship, *Ellida.* It had been sailed by both Thorsten and his father.

People said that the shapely oak timbers which made the sides were neither

nailed nor joined,—but had grown together. The ship was long and sinuous of form like a sea-serpent, rising at the prow in the graceful curve of a neck and head, with a wide open, fiery red mouth. The sides were painted in blue and gold, and at the stern a mighty tail uncoiled itself in silver-scaled rings. It had black wings, tipped with scarlet, and when they were unfurled the ship, *Ellida,* could sail faster than the eagle flies and outdistance a storm that would have crushed any other Viking ship.

When Frithjof's warriors in shining armor filled her decks, *Ellida* rode the waves like a floating castle. Her fame and beauty were as boundless as the seas.

Frithjof was now not only rich and powerful; but also very brave and true. Ingeborg, too, had grown from a child to a young woman, as beautiful and full of grace as had been the promise of her girlhood. Her father had died, and her brother, Helgé, was king in his stead, so

Frithjof went to him and asked for Ingeborg's hand in marriage. He told King Helgé how he and Ingeborg had loved each other from childhood, and that he now had power and riches, with which to serve the King.

But King Helgé was only angry at the request.

"It can never be," he said. "My sister comes of a kingly line and you are only a Viking. King Ring of Norway has asked Ingeborg to come to his court as queen and I have given him my permission for the marriage."

Helgé was a coward, who had been terrified by the armies that King Ring sent to threaten him if he refused Ingeborg's hand.

And although King Ring was an old man, Helgé imprisoned Ingeborg in a temple in the woods in order to keep her away from Frithjof. Here she sat day after day, trying to sort the gold and silver threads for her embroidery frame, but

she was not able to thread her needle, because her eyes were so blinded with tears. Frithjof knew nothing about King Ring nor about Ingeborg's imprisonment.

He might never have seen her again, but her younger brother told him of the place where she had been hidden. As soon as he learned this, Frithjof set sail on his dragon ship for the shores where the temple stood.

Thinking that King Ring was a handsome, young, and wealthy king, Frithjof said to himself, " Perhaps she wishes to be a queen."

But Ingeborg greeted Frithjof just as joyfully as she had when they played together, and she told him that there was no one in the world she cared for as much as her old playmate.

Frithjof put his magic bracelet on her arm and she promised never to take it off unless she no longer loved him.

This love inspired Frithjof so that he

returned to King Helgé and begged him to make Ingeborg happy. Then King Helgé's anger was very great, and thus he spoke:

"As a punishment I shall banish you from our land. There is an earl, who lives west of here in the Orkney Islands, and for years he has not paid his tribute to my court. Set sail and collect this tribute. If you return without it you shall be punished by death."

No sooner had Frithjof started on this voyage than King Helgé summoned the trolls to stir up such a storm at sea that not even the wonderful ship, *Ellida,* could weather it.

The day became suddenly as dark as night, and the sea-gulls began to cry. The waves rolled up toward the black sky —that was streaked red with lightning. The sea seemed to yawn to the very bottom, and big hail rattled down on the deck of the ship.

Frithjof steered straight ahead, for he

felt that nothing could harm the Viking ship in which he rode.

But the beams creaked and the masts bent, and seas — mountain high — submerged it.

"This is not a storm from Valhalla," Frithjof cried at last. "There is witchcraft in it!"

He climbed to the top of the tallest mast, and looking intently for a long time, he caught a glimpse of something in the distance. It looked like a floating island; but as it came nearer, he saw that it was a giant whale, and on its back were two trolls who had been summoned by King Helgé to rouse the sea to such a pitch of fury.

"Save me from this witchcraft, my good *Ellida!*" Frithjof cried, speaking to the ship as if it could understand his words. And it did understand. Braving the storm, the dragon ship plunged in the direction of the whale and cut the creature in half, and the trolls disap-

peared, drowned in the trough of the sea.

Then the wind died away and the water was as smooth as glass. Frithjof had a peaceful voyage to the Orkney Islands.

With his magic sword he overcame the watchman from the earl's palace and the earl, as soon as he saw him, welcomed Frithjof, because he had known Thorsten, his father.

"I will pay no tribute to King Helgé," the earl said, "but here is a bag of gold to reward the son of my friend, the noble Viking, Thorsten." And he feasted Frithjof and kept him in his castle until the winter was over and it was fair weather for the return voyage.

There was blue in the sky, a touch of green in the fields, and much joy in Frithjof's heart as he set sail. The winds were favorable, and he could hear Ingeborg's voice in the singing of the waves.

The ship almost flew until it reached the shore where Ingeborg had been im-

prisoned. Here Frithjof landed and hastened through the woods to the temple, but Ingeborg was not there. She was now King Ring's queen. The temple was in ruins. Frithjof's beautiful home at Balestrand, Sogn, had been burned to the ground, and when he arrived at Helgé's castle, Frithjof found that the magic bracelet of gold had been torn from Ingeborg's arm and put on a statue in the courtyard.

When Frithjof saw this he became so angry that he went into the King's palace, and when Helgé reached out his hands for the tribute, Frithjof delivered the bag of gold with such force that he knocked all the King's teeth out. The King summoned his warriors; but they did not dare to fight the great and good Frithjof. He was now banished from his native land.

For several years the good ship *Ellida* carried this noble Viking to all the foreign lands, where he gained fame and

fortune. But he felt homeless and lonely for Ingeborg.

At last it was the blessed Christmas. King Ring was celebrating the Yuletide in his Danish kingdom, and by his side was Queen Ingeborg.

She was hardly as merry as one ought to be at Christmas time. She could not forget her playmate and lover, Frithjof, the Viking, who she thought had forgotten her.

The castle was decked with greens, the banqueting tables were loaded with roasted meats and pastries and sweets, and no one was turned away from King Ring's door, for he was a very kind-hearted old man.

Suddenly, a stranger appeared at the feast. He was different in appearance from any one of the other guests. He was apparently an old man, big and bent, leaning on a staff. From head to foot he was wrapped in a bear's pelt. He sat down close to the door, where the poor sat

in those days, and the company whispered jokes to each other about him.

One of the courtiers as he passed by pointed his finger at him. Then Frithjof rose, took the courtier as if he were a plaything, raised him to the ceiling, made him turn a somersault in the air and then put him down nicely on his feet.

King Ring noticed the commotion and asked the stranger kindly, "Who are you?"

Frithjof answered, "I beg your pardon, King Ring, I did not come here to disturb your Christmas peace; but this courtier made fun of me. I just twirled him round in the air and put him down on his feet again without doing him any harm."

King Ring bade the warriors not to pay any attention to this incident. Then he beckoned for the stranger to come to the table.

Just then the Christmas boar was being brought in.

The boar was the emblem of the Sun god, who gathers strength at Yuletide to overcome the winter giants,—frost, ice, and snow.

The boar was decorated with wreaths and evergreens and had an apple in its mouth. It was so huge that four picked men carried it on their shoulders. As the bearers set the huge platter down, all the guests—including the stranger—bowed their heads.

When they raised their heads they beheld a strange sight. The shaggy bear's pelt had fallen from the stranger's head and showed a wealth of golden locks. He wore a blue velvet cloak, and beneath it could be seen a rich hunting suit and a silver belt engraven with pictures of the hunt.

The Queen's pale cheeks flushed, for Frithjof stood before her, as tall as Thor and as fair as any Viking in the Northland.

Frithjof had come in this disguise to

King Ring's court, because he longed so much to see Ingeborg. And the old King grew fond of him, for he could tell stories of his voyages in his dragon ship, skate more gracefully than any one else, and sing the wild sagas of the North. He was daring and noble, too, in all he did.

One day King Ring and the Queen were driving over the fjord to a wedding. They had a fast horse, and Frithjof, on his skates, was racing with them. But he could skate so fast that every once in a while he would amuse himself by carving Ingeborg's name in the ice with his skates until they caught up with him. Presently he warned the King that the ice was too weak; but the King drove on. Suddenly the ice broke, and the horse, King and Queen plunged into the icy water. But Frithjof grasped the horse's head by the bit and held him up by the left hand, and with one superhuman pull with the right hand he lifted the sleigh with the King and Queen from the water.

The King rewarded him with his own gold bracelet, and said, "I do not believe that even Frithjof the Viking could have taken such a lift." "Well," said the stranger, "now you have seen Frithjof do it."

Although this was the first time that Frithjof had given his right name—(in order not to embarrass Ingeborg),—yet the King had suspected ever since the first evening in the castle that this giant could be none other than Frithjof.

Spring came, and at King Ring's court we still find Frithjof. He loved Ingeborg's little boy as if he were his own son. The lad looked every inch a Viking. His yellow curls falling over his broad shoulders formed a fine setting for the beautifully formed face with the pure white skin, rosy cheeks and blue eyes; while his dress of skins showed his strong limbs and arms.

On a beautiful spring day a hunting party was formed. Queen Ingeborg rode

with the huntsmen. She was graceful as a summer cloud, so lightly did she sit upon her white horse.

Frithjof rode near the King and toward noon the party stopped to rest in a forest glade. Frithjof spread his mantle on the ground that the King might rest on it, and as the old King slept a great temptation came to the Viking. Frithjof was one of those heroes of the Northland who was able to understand the language of the birds. As he sat there in the woods beside the sleeping King, he heard a voice say:

"Strike the King and kill him. Now is your chance. Then you can take Ingeborg and her little son for your own."

This was the voice of a blackbird, and as soon as Frithjof heard it, he threw his sword far away in order not to be overcome by the temptation.

But when he threw his sword, he heard another voice say:

"Do not harm the old King. The gods

do not permit the killing of an unarmed man." This was the voice of a white dove.

So Frithjof only kept guard over the King, who soon stirred and opened his eyes.

He had *not* been asleep; he had only pretended slumber to test Frithjof, and behind each tree he had stationed an armed soldier ready to come to his rescue if necessary.

But King Ring had found Frithjof true, honorable and worthy. Each day the King grew more feeble, and at last he was not even able to ride to the hunt.

One day he called Frithjof to him and said, " Soon I shall depart to live in the halls of Valhalla. I wish to leave Ingeborg and our little son in your care. When I am gone, my kingdom, my queen, and my son are to be yours."

So there came a day when the Vikings and nobles assembled to give honor to King Frithjof. He stood in their midst

with the fair Ingeborg by his side, and her golden-haired little lad raised high on his shield.

"Long live the King!" came the shout from the assemblage. Frithjof, the Viking, through his integrity, valor, and patience, had come into his kingdom.

# CHAPTER IX

## CONFIRMATION

THE children in Norway are required by law to study religion in the public schools every day for about seven years. During the seventh year they must also receive religious instruction from the Minister of the Gospel. With him they study one day a week. This, as a rule, is during the summer months. Then they have to review their catechism and a Bible history. The minister may also add lectures on Church history and other subjects.

This constitutes the children's preparation for Confirmation. The Confirmation is a public examination in the church, with the minister as examiner.

Every person in Norway who belongs to the State Church, which is the Lutheran Church, is required by law to

be baptized and confirmed. In the spring, when it was cold, the confirmation class met in the old parsonage. Here was an extremely large, airy hall with numerous small window-panes in sashes of lead. The seats consisted of many rows of long benches. One-half of these seats were occupied by the boys, and on the opposite side and facing the boys, sat the girls. The pastor would then be seated at a small table in the middle of the room, or he would pace up and down the aisle between the boys and the girls.

Most of the ministers in the State Church were benevolent, good-natured men, with a pleasant smile and a fatherly interest in the welfare of their members. But the one who confirmed me was rather a contrast to the ordinary type.

It would not be nice to tell his name and also his peculiarities, for although he is dead, some of his relatives might read this. Somehow he was always nice to me,

therefore my remarks concerning him are not prompted by any ill feelings.

In order to give a truthful story, I might say that this minister was not renowned—but rather notorious for his anger, his strength, and his penuriousness, which made him almost a miser. One of his wealthy uncles had paid for his education, and thus he became a minister;—although people said that he seemed more fit for the business of his father—who was a butcher. The only good word I ever heard about him was by my father, who said that he could preach logical sermons and was very well acquainted with the Bible. Both children and adults were afraid of him. Never shall I forget the first time we, as a confirmation class, met with him. It was an extraordinarily large class, including the children from three parishes. We were all on time. There was perfect silence in the room. Every child sat with staring eyes watching the door, as if they expected a

ghost to enter. At last the door opened and a rather small, nervous man with large watery eyes, thin gray hair and full beard, walked briskly into the room and placed some books on a small table. He had previously obtained a list of our names from the school teachers in each district.

From these lists the minister commenced the roll call for each respective district. The children were so scared that they answered "Present" in all kinds of trembling voices. After the roll call there was perfect silence like the calm before a heavy storm. The suspense was awful, for now the examination would begin, and what would he ask, and who would be called on first, and would he send us home if we made an incorrect answer? If he did, it would be an everlasting shame and it would not end with the shame, he would make us go and read for him at least one year more than the rest of our comrades.

These meditations were stopped abruptly by the pastor's loud, sharp voice as he asked a girl a question. The girl was so frightened that she could only blush and cough, and instantly he turned around and asked me the same question. I rose and stood like a soldier at "attention" while I commenced to give the answer in a low, trembling voice. He told me to read louder so that all could hear it, and as I followed his instructions and recited very well the Bible story about Joseph and his brethren, he seemed rather pleased, although he stopped me now and then and added things that were not in our text-books.

When I came home my father wanted me to tell in detail all about our first meeting. Among other things I also told that the pastor did not have a text-book in Bible history, but that he evidently expected us to learn the whole Bible.

"If that is the case," said my father, "you who can learn so easily had better

memorize all the chapters in the Bible covering the corresponding lesson in your Bible history." This I had to do, and every week my father would hear me recite chapter after chapter from the Bible. Learning from the class that I was the only one who made all this extra preparation, I wanted to stop it, but my father made me keep it up all the time until confirmation.

My father's object was to have me stand highest in the church aisle on Confirmation Sunday. This was regarded as the greatest honor obtainable for a child at that age. It was not altogether vanity that prompted my father in urging me on for the highest place. One reason was that I was the youngest in the class and unless my scholarship were extra good, this minister would certainly not let me pass. Secondly, I had been reading with the minister only six months, and the former year he had *flunked* the whole class, stating that he would not confirm any one

unless he read with him two years. But I wanted to be confirmed that fall in order to attend a high school which would be in session only two years more at a place so close to my home that I could afford to attend it.

My father had recently lost the farm and all he had by being kind-hearted enough to endorse papers for a merchant and a couple of farmers, all three of them going bankrupt at once. At this time my father was already an old man, and I, although the youngest child,—thirteen and a half years of age—was henceforth obliged to earn all I spent.

Of the preacher's fiery temper I shall give you only one illustration. It was in the summer when the class met in the large church. The minister, as usual, lost his temper, and holding in his left hand an old book with poor and time-worn binding, he hit it so hard with his right hand that every leaf of the book flew, as if swept by a storm, over the pews, under

the pews, and through the aisles. Then he made a flying trip down to the rear of the church, opened the door wide and took a couple of the big boys, who were poor students, carried them one in each hand to the door and threw them down the steps. One of the girls commenced to gather up some of the leaves of his book, but when I shook my head at her she dropped them. The minister paced up and down the aisles. The children watched in perfect silence him and myself. They expected me to be the leader in almost everything, but I had made up my mind that unless he asked us to pick up the leaves of his book, he could do it himself. And so, at last, he picked up those in the aisle and left the rest. The anger flashed like lightning out of his big eyes as he announced with a voice of thunder that it was lunch-time, but that the two fellows he had thrown out should not have anything to eat. When we told them, they started to

weep, because they were poor and very hungry, as they had been up early in the morning and walked eight miles to the church.

We all carried our own lunches, and as it was private property the pastor had nothing to say about the matter. Therefore, I offered to go into the church and bring it out to them. They were all afraid, but I told them that I would take the responsibility in case it should reach the minister's ears and so I fetched them their lunches. Nothing more was heard about this incident.

The reason that I was less afraid of the minister than the rest of them was because the pastor had a holy respect for my father. The peasants wanted to discharge him, but that would be a very difficult case to carry into court, as the minister and all the civil officers were appointed by the King. This means that the appointments were actually made by the respective State departments and approved by the

King. Therefore, a government attorney would be afraid to plead a case against a minister in the State Church. On this account the parishioners begged my father to plead the case for them, but he refused, stating that he was getting old, and the minister had done him no harm. And furthermore, their evidences against him were not clear enough to hold in the higher courts. Thus the parson continued to hold his position.

# CHAPTER X

## EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN NORWAY

EDUCATION is of common interest to young and old. Therefore, although our space is limited, we shall give as complete a description as possible of the excellent educational system in Norway. This country, together with Sweden, Denmark, and Finland, can boast of the fact that there is hardly any illiteracy.

That these countries rank foremost in the world in regard to universal education has its *immediate cause* in the Protestant reformation.

The Lutheran Church, which is the State Church in Norway, requires confirmation before a person can enter into matrimony, or participate in the social, political, and religious life of the country. But neither a boy nor a girl can be con-

firmed until he or she has finished an elementary school course.

Thus the Church and State have coöperated admirably to prevent adult illiteracy, and for more than two hundred years they have had an excellent public school system; and for almost one hundred years they have had compulsory educational requirements.

The small population of Norway is scattered over a very large area, thus making many districts sparsely settled. This makes it exceedingly difficult to organize the elementary education for children. But education is highly prized by the people in general, and by united efforts they have managed to build up a complete system of education from the primary schools up to the University. The results of this achievement have been so excellent, that of late years educators from different countries have been studying and adopting many points from the Norwegian school system.

Owing to the fact that the great bulk of the Norse population resides in the rural districts, we find two great difficulties standing in the way of the children's education, namely, the scattered nature of the population and the lack of roads and means of communication. To overcome this, a law was passed in 1827, providing that near each parish church a permanent elementary school should be established. But for many of the children it would be impossible to reach this permanent school at the parish church, as they would either have to travel for miles over rugged mountain roads, or row over large sheets of water.

The only means of bringing education to these children was by a system of *traveling schoolmasters*. These teachers went to a given centre for a few weeks at a time and gave instruction to the children collected from the neighboring farms, and then passed on to another district. In 1837 we find that ninety-two per cent. of

the country children were taught in these ambulatory schools; but now less than two per cent. are thus taught. This shows, in spite of heavy obstacles, a remarkable development of the rural school system.

Norway is divided into about six thousand school districts for elementary schools. Here the school age is from seven to fifteen in towns and eight to fifteen in rural districts.

The course of instruction given is as follows: First Division (children seven to ten years)—The Christian religion, Norwegian language, arithmetic, writing, and singing. Second Division (children ten to fourteen years)—The same studies as above, with the addition of geography, elementary geometry, history (with lessons in civics), botany, zoology and the elements of physics and the fundamental features of hygiene. In this latter study the effects and dangers of intoxicants are to be specially pointed out to the children. In addition, at least one of the following

subjects must be taken: manual work (sloyd for boys and needlework for girls), drawing, and physical exercises, which in the case of boys may include elementary instruction in rifle-shooting.

Religious instruction occupies a foremost place. This is strictly in accordance with the State Church, the Evangelical Lutheran. There is, however, a "conscience clause," and the children of dissenters from the State Church may be wholly or partially exempted from religious instruction, but as they form only a small fraction of the population there is, happily for Norway, no burning "religious difficulty" in the matter of education.

The law is very strict concerning school attendance, and if the child is employed so as to prevent the proper preparation of lessons, the guilty party may be fined 100 kroner (about $25.00).

As a rule the parents take an active part in the supervision of the home studies

of the children. This is very essential, as many of the children in the rural districts are obliged, for economic reasons, to help with the work, and thus they can attend school only every other day or on alternate weeks.

Co-education is the rule in the sparsely settled country districts, but in the towns the sexes may also be taught separately.

The Municipal Council in Christiania and other cities has an excellent method for providing wholesome food for the poor children during the winter. If it is demonstrated that the parents are unable to provide the necessary food for the children, then they are served meals free of charge. The other children can pay at the low rate of two cents and a half for each meal.

In both town and country they have continuation schools. Then come County Schools (*amtskoler*) and People's High Schools. These latter are not unlike the

country academies in America. These schools aim to give a more or less general cultural training to young people, who have passed the ordinary school age.

The management of the primary schools is under the control of a local school board composed of one clergyman, one teacher, the president of the local council, or an alderman, and as many more members chosen from the municipal council as the council itself shall determine. The school board elects the teachers, draws up the budget, provides for school supervision, and works out the details in the courses of study.

Secondary education laws underwent a complete revision in Norway in the year 1896. Prior to this time the general management of secondary schools had been committed to the care of the Church and the Department of Education; but the Act of 1896 provided for what is called an Education Council, which consists of a body of educational experts, who assist

and advise the Department of Education in all matters concerning the schools.

Through this arrangement, the elementary schools were also more closely correlated with the secondary education. The secondary schools are now divided into the "middelskole" and the gymnasium.

These are defined as follows in the Act of 1896: "The middelskole" is a school for children which, in unison with the primary school, gives its pupils a complete, thorough, general education, adapted to the receptive powers of children.

The gymnasium is a young people's school, which, on the foundation laid in the "middelskole," leads to a complete higher general education, that may also serve as a basis for scientific studies. Both "middelskole" and gymnasium shall contribute to the religious and moral training of the pupils, and it should also be their common aim to develop the pupils both mentally and physically into competent young people.

The middlė schools take children between eleven and fifteen years, and the courses include practically what is given in most American high schools. The middle school examination is very thorough, consisting both of written and oral work.

The students who pass in this examination may now enter the classical or literary high schools (gymnasium), which prepares for the university and other higher educational institutions.

A gymnasium used to have three lines; but now there are usually two, the language-history line and the science line. The course is usually finished in three years, and the final examination is of great importance. Those who fail in their written work cannot participate in the oral examination, but the students who *pass* in both the written and oral work have finished "examen artium," and can proceed to the university without further examination.

The secondary schools in Norway are co-educational, and women are now admitted to the university, and they occupy many professional offices. Rural gymnasiums with a four year course may also give "examen artium."

The university at Christiania, founded in 1811, forms the crown of Norway's educational system. This institution has about two thousand students and eighty professors and instructors.

Many women avail themselves of a university training, and as universal suffrage prevails, they have already had three women members of the parliament.

The university is organized into five faculties: theology, law, medicine, philosophy, and science.

The professional courses vary from four to seven years. The general management of the university is under the ministry of public instruction, although the professors are appointed by the King.

The professional staff numbers among its members many men of international reputation, men who have done good work in scientific, historical, and linguistic fields of research.

The tuition at this institution is free. The students are not hampered by any strict discipline. They may attend lectures or not just as they please. But there is a great day of reckoning, for the final examinations are long and difficult and the censorship is very strict. In order to prepare for this, many of the students employ tutors and, in addition, they borrow lectures from their comrades, and " cram " nights and days. Many of them fail.

Their great social centre is the Students' Union (Studenter Samfundet). Here lectures and musical evenings are given on Saturdays during the terms from September to May.

Their manuscript paper "Avisen " consists of satirical verses and various short

articles. This is read aloud each Saturday evening at the students' gathering, and it occasions much amusement.

When these young, gay students finish their courses and return to the rural districts as physicians, clergymen, or lawyers, they become very worthy and sedate members of society, and exercise that useful influence which the possession of a liberal education ought always to carry with it.

Connected with the university in Christiania are the University Library (about 350,000 volumes), the Botanical Gardens, the Historical Museum, the Astronomical and Magnetic Observatory, the Meteorological Institute, and the Biological Marine Station (at Dröbak).

The hospitals of Christiania are also affiliated with the university.

As for the development of the national consciousness, the university has been a most potent factor, and the contemporary leaders in politics, letters, the arts, and

science claim the university of Christiania as their *alma mater.*

This brief sketch of the educational system in Norway would be very incomplete without at least mentioning that they have an efficient system of technical institutions and a higher technical school in Trondhjem, which might be called a Technical University.

There are many technical night schools and also workingmen's colleges in Norway, where technical instruction is given in the form of lectures by scientific men, physicians, schoolmasters, and military men. The lectures are given in the evening and the principal expenses are shared by the State and the municipalities.

Norway has eleven normal schools for the education of public school teachers. The excellent agricultural college at Aas, near Christiania, has raised the standard of both the entrance examination and the course itself, so that it is now a regular Agricultural University. Con-

nected with it is the Government forestry.

They also have excellent naval and military schools. For the training of artists, artistic craftsmen, and teachers of art, we have the Royal Art and Industrial School at Christiania, founded in 1818.

An important institution is a High School in Home Economics, for the purpose of training teachers in this subject. It is a three-years' course, including one year of preparatory work.

There are also schools of industrial art for women, where fine needlework, weaving, and dressmaking are taught. A first-class music and organ school is supported by the Government at Christiania.

Other indirect educational agencies are the Library and Philosophical Society at Christiania, which has charge of the Fridthjof Nansen fund for the advancement of science; the Royal Literary and Philosophical Society at Trondhjem, founded in 1760; the national society for

the preservation of ancient Norwegian monuments, and the industrial art museums at Christiania, Bergen and Trondhjem.

There are about six hundred and fifty libraries in the country, each containing from one hundred to ten thousand volumes; but many more libraries are needed.

The workingmen's colleges have done pioneer work in this field; but much more remains to be done.

Let us hope that the Norse patriots who are responsible for the policies of this country will follow the suggestions of the great poet Wergeland, who said, "Boghylden er den stige, hvorpaa man bliver sin overmands lige." (The bookshelf is the ladder on which the inferior may climb and be equal to his superior.)

# CHAPTER XI

## POPULAR SUPERSTITIONS AND FAIRY TALES

WE are told in a legend that the giants of old used Norway as a playground, and they have certainly left many wonderful playthings behind them. The great boulders were their baseballs, the lofty peaks their basket-balls, and the fjords their great swimming-pools. But, judging from the grandeur and beauty of the country, they must have been highly developed in landscape architecture. Certainly no land seems better suited to be a home for the creatures of popular superstition than Norway. The frowning cliffs and sequestered valleys seem still, to the peasant, to be inhabited by the beings who figure in their mythology. Not that they believe all the folk-tales, but these are to them only figures of speech

expressing in a vivid form some deeper truths.

On the hills dwelt monsters, or trolls; in the valleys or beneath the earth dwelt elves and fairies.

In the names of many places are to be found reminiscences of the belief in this race of giants and witches as in the name of the remarkable mountain chain in Romsdalen called Trolltinderne (The Trold's peaks).

Troldwand (Trold or Witches' Lake), near one of the arms of the Jostedal glacier, is surrounded by rocky walls and reached through a deep and gloomy ravine. This is one of the many lakes that has a witch dwelling on its bottom, and many a hero has been known to descend in order to kill the ogress.

Of "Troldkirker" (Trold-churches) there are very many. Sometimes you can see the brooms on which the witches ride at night to these meeting places. We have also "Troldstol" (Witches' Chair),

"Troldfjord" (Witches' Fjord), etc., etc.

The hills above the city of Bergen were among the chief places in Europe which popular superstition fixed upon as the scenes for the celebrated Witches' Sabbath, which was observed regularly.

GUDBRANDSDALEN.
**Picturesque valley between Sorum and Garmo.**

VAAGE LAKE, GUDBRANDSDALEN.
**The building of this road cost about five dollars a foot.**

MIDNIGHT SUN, LOFOTEN, NORWAY.

**Poets and painters have tried in vain to express the beauty of this natural phenomenon. Norway is called "The Land of the Midnight Sun."**

# CHAPTER XII

## POPULAR NORSE TALES

### *"The Priest and the Clerk"*

ONCE upon a time there was a priest, who was such a bully that he bawled out, ever so far off, whenever he met any one driving on the king's highway:

"Out of the way, out of the way! Here comes the priest!"

One day when he was driving along and behaving so, he met the king himself.

"Out of the way, out of the way!" he bawled a long way off. But the king drove on and kept the road; so that time it was the priest who had to turn his horse aside, and when the king came alongside of him, he said, "To-morrow you shall come to me to the palace, and if you can't answer three questions which I will set you, you shall lose hood and gown for your pride's sake."

This was something else than the priest was wont to hear. He could bawl and bully, shout, and behave worse than badly. All that he could do, but questions and answers were out of his power.

So he set off to the clerk who was said to be better in a gown than the priest himself, and told him he had no mind to go to the king.

For, as the saying goes, one fool can ask more than ten wise men can answer; and the end was, he got the clerk to go in his place.

Yes! The clerk set off, and came to the palace in the priest's gown and hood. There the king met him out in the porch with crown and sceptre, and was so grand that he glittered and gleamed.

"Well! Are you there?" said the king.

Yes; he was there, sure enough.

"Tell me first," said the king, "how far the east is from the west?"

"Just a day's journey," said the clerk.

"How is that?" asked the king.

"Don't you know," said the clerk, "that the sun rises in the east and sets in the west, and he does it just nicely in one day."

"Very well!" said the king; "but tell me now what you think I am worth, as you see me stand here?"

"Well," said the clerk, "our Lord was valued at thirty pieces of silver, so I don't think I can set your price higher than twenty-nine."

"All very fine!" said the king; "but as you are so wise, perhaps you can tell me what I am thinking about now?"

"Oh!" said the clerk; "you are thinking it's the priest who stands before you, but so help me, if you don't think wrong, for I am the clerk."

"Be off home with you," said the king, "and be you priest, and let him be clerk," and so it was.

## CHAPTER XIII

### "THE HARE AND THE HEIRESS"

ONCE on a time there was a hare, that was frisking up and down under the greenwood tree.

"Oh! hurrah! hip, hip, hurrah!" he cried, and leapt and sprang, and all at once he threw a somersault, and stood upon his hind legs. Just then a fox came slouching by.

"Good-day, good-day," said the hare; "I'm so merry to-day, for you must know I was married this morning."

"Lucky fellow you," said the fox.

"Ah, no! not so lucky after all," said the hare, "for she was very heavy-handed, and it was an old witch I got to wife."

"Then you were an unlucky fellow," said the fox.

"Oh, not so unlucky either," said the hare, "for she was an heiress. She had a cottage of her own."

"Then you were lucky after all," said the fox.

"No, no! not so lucky either," said the hare, "for the cottage caught fire and was burnt, and all we had with it."

"That I call downright unlucky," said the fox.

"Oh, no; not so very unlucky after all," said the hare, "for my witch of a wife was burnt along with her cottage."

## CHAPTER XIV

### "THE SKIPPER AND OLD NICK"

ONCE on a time there was a skipper who was so wonderfully lucky in everything he undertook; there was no one who got such freights, and no one who earned so much money, for it rolled in upon him on all sides, and, in a word, there was no one who could make such voyages as he, for whithersoever he sailed he took the wind with him;—nay! men did say he had only to turn his hat and the wind turned the way he wished it to blow.

So he sailed for many years, both in the timber trade and to China, and he had gathered money together like grass. But it so happened that once he was coming home across the North Sea with every sail set, as though he had stolen both ship and cargo; but he who wanted to lay hold on him went faster still. It was Old Nick,

for with him he had made a bargain, as one may well fancy, and that very day the time was up, and he might look any moment for Old Nick to come and fetch him.

Well! the skipper came up on deck out of the cabin and looked at the weather; then he called for the carpenter and some others of the crew, and said they must go down into the hold and hew two holes in the ship's bottom, and when they had done that they were to lift the pumps out of their beds and drive them down tight into the holes they had made, so that the sea might rise high up into the pumps.

The crew wondered at all this and thought it a funny bit of work, but they did as the skipper ordered; they hewed holes in the ship's bottom and drove the pumps in so tight that never a drop of water could come to the cargo, but up in the pumps themselves the North Sea stood seven feet high.

They had only just thrown the chips

overboard after their piece of work when Old Nick came on board in a gust of wind and caught the skipper by the throat.

"Stop, Father!" said the skipper, "there's no need to be in such a hurry," and as he said that he began to defend himself and by the help of a marlin-spike to loose the claws which Old Nick had stuck into him.

"Haven't you made a bargain that you would always keep the ship dry and tight?" asked the skipper. "Yes! you're a pretty fellow; look down the pumps, there's the water standing seven feet high in the pipe. Pump, devil, pump! and pump the ship dry, and then you may take me and have me as soon and as long as you choose."

Old Nick was not so clever that he was not taken in; he pumped and strove, and the sweat ran down his back like a brook, so that you might have turned a mill at the end of his backbone, but he only pumped out of the North Sea and into the

North Sea again. At last he got tired of that work, and when he could not pump a stroke more, he set off in a sad temper home to his grandmother to take a rest. As for the skipper, he let him stay a skipper as long as he chose, and if he isn't dead, he is still perhaps sailing on his voyages whithersoever he will, and twisting the wind as he chooses only by turning his hat.

# CHAPTER XV

## NORSE MYTHOLOGY

MYTHOLOGY, as a study, is both pleasant and profitable. Mythology is a product of long periods of a people's intellectual development, in which old ideas have constantly been mixed with new conceptions. Therefore you find in it, as in all old religious systems, that the ideas of the life hereafter are often vague, even contradictory. In the Norse mythology we can follow the march of the human mind forward to new light.

Our knowledge of the heathen religion, called Norse Mythology, comes to us through the literary collections called Eddas. These Eddas were written by gifted Norsemen, who emigrated from Norway to Iceland.

They tell us that originally there was no heaven above nor earth beneath, only a bottomless pit with a fountain from which issued twelve rivers. The rivers, as they flowed from the fountain, froze into solid ice, and the bottomless pit was likewise filled with ice.

Far to the south there was a world of mist, from which issued a warm wind which melted the ice in the frozen rivers. Vapors arose into the air and formed clouds, out of which was formed Ymir, the frost giant, and the cow Andhumbla. The latter nourished the giant by licking the salt and the hoarfrost from the ice.

One day when the cow was licking the salt stone, the hair of a man appeared; the next day she licked the stone a head appeared, and the third day an entire being. This was a god. He married the daughter of a giant race, and unto them were born three sons—Odin (spirit), Vile (will) and Ve (holy). These three with their father, Bör, killed Ymir. The blood

which flowed from his veins caused a deluge which swept away all the giants except Bergelmer, who with his wife took refuge at the ends of the earth in a place called Jutunheim (home of giants).

But of the body of Ymir, the gods created the earth.

"Of Ymir's flesh
Was earth created,
Of his blood the sea,
Of his bones the hills,
Of his hair trees and plants,
Of his skull the heavens,
And of his brows
The gentler powers
Formed Midgard for the sons of men,
But of his brain
The heavy clouds are
All created."

The gods provided, likewise, for day and night, the seasons, and plant-life. But the universe still lacked human beings, and, according to the legend, this is the way they were created: One day

Odin, Vile, and Ve started out together and walked along the seashore, where they found an ash (ask) and an elm (embla) hewn into the rough semblance of the human form. The gods gazed at first upon the inanimate wood in silent wonder, then Odin gave these logs souls, Vile bestowed motion and senses, and Ve contributed blood, fair complexions, and the power of speech.

Midgard was assigned to this couple as their residence and this man Ask and his wife Embla became the progenitors of the Norsemen and all other human beings.

Aesir was the collective name of their deities. They included Odin and his twelve sons or grandsons; and the Aesynia—namely Frigga, the wife of Odin, and her twelve subordinate goddesses.

Odin, as befitted the all-father, the author of gods and men, was characterized by the highest wisdom, knowledge, and skill. In order to gain all this wisdom he

had sacrificed one of his eyes for the privilege to drink of Mimer's Well, the fountain of wisdom.

Odin had also been hanging nine nights on a windy tree in order to discover the Norse Runic alphabet, which is composed of sixteen letters.

The first day of May was sacred to this god, and one day in each week is called by his Saxon name, Wodensday or Wednesday. Aasgaard, the dwelling place of the gods, contains many gold and silver palaces, the most beautiful of all being Valhalla, the abode of Odin. Here seated upon his throne, Lidskjalv, and guarded on either side by wolves, he overlooks both heaven and earth. Valhalla is splendidly decorated with burnished weapons, the ceiling made of spears, the roof covered with bright shields, and the walls decorated with the armor and coats of mail of the warriors. To this hall the valkyries (val—dead bodies on the field of battle, and kyria—to choose), bring the

dead warriors who fall on the field of battle. The valkyries select those who are to fall and be feasted and entertained with Odin in Valhalla, while those who die a natural death go to Hel in the underworld. Thor, the oldest son of Odin, was the war-god, preëminent for valor and strength. The thunder was the rumble made when he rode through the air with his goats, and the lightning was caused by the throwing of his hammer, Mjölner, which hit anything he aimed at and always returned to his hand of its own accord.

Thor's symbol was a hammer, and was modified by the early missionaries into the form of the cross, obviously in order to wean them from the ancient beliefs by gentle degrees. Both these symbols have always been sacred and protective marks, and used by the ignorant to ward off evil spirits.

Brage, like his father Odin, is the god of poetry and eloquence. His health was

always drunk at the great feasts, in cups fashioned in the form of a ship. This toast was called Bragaful, and upon it the head of the house and his guests used to make oaths to accomplish deeds of valor, which, in their more sober moments, they found difficult to fulfil, often at the sacrifice of their life, hence the origin of the English expression "to brag."

Brage's wife, Idun, called the good goddess, keeps the apples from which the gods eat to preserve their youth. Thor's wife is the beautiful Siv (Sif), with hair of gold. Skade, Njörd's wife, was, like Gerd, of Jötun race, and Snotra was the goddess of good sense and womanly graces.

Balder, the good, was all purity and brightness. The "Norns" are not only in the world, but they are the real rulers of it; even the gods must submit to their decrees. They rule over life and death, and man's destiny; no one can escape the ca-

STALHEIM HOTEL, NAERODALEN, NORWAY.

**The ascent of 1000 feet from the valley to the hotel is hardly noticed, as the grade is divided on sixteen long windings of the road. On reaching the top one beholds a most wonderful panoramic view displaying the valley, mountains, and waterfalls.**

**Drying the Hay.**
**In the beautiful valley of Otta, Gudbrandsdalen.**

lamities which they have preordained. But they have not the absolute power attributed to the fates in Greek and Roman mythology. They are also subject to an ultimate fate. They disappear at Ragnarok. (The etymology of Ragnarok is "the darkness of the gods;" but the ordinary meaning is the end of the world.)

Freya ruled the rain and sunshine; Tyr gave victory in sports; Heimdall is the sentinel of the gods, and lives at Bifrost (the rainbow), the celestial bridge over which gods and men ride to Valhal. Vidar, the silent one, is, next to Thor, the strongest of the gods.

Aege is the ocean god, etc., etc., etc.

In the society of the gods lived Loke, a malevolent power, whose mischief-loving spirit often caused them sorrow, though sometimes they found his subtlety of service. But Loke, like all evil-doers, did not escape punishment. He was tied by the Aesir in a rocky cavern where poisonous adders drop venom into his face, and

there he will have to lie till Ragnarok, or the end of the world. But his faithful wife, Sigyn, stands always by him, and gathers the dripping venom in a cup. Only when she empties the cup does it drop into Loke's face, and then he writhes in pain so that the earth quakes.

From this Norse mythology, also called Odinism, we learn many things. The Greeks used to say that a man becomes like the god he worships.

In Odinism the greatest ideal was, "Be brave!" Valor was the virtue, above all others, which it called upon its votaries to practise. It was courage that the gods loved best to see in a man, and cowardice that they hated most, and punished most severely. Therefore, to die bravely in battle was the most sure way to Odin and his feast. Hence the believers in this creed learned to regard life with contempt,—and peace as a disgraceful state of existence. No wonder such doctrine inspired them to be success-

ful warriors, and they became like unto Thor, the War-god, whom they worshipped.

### The End of the World

The world, in which there is continual strife, is in the Norse Mythology represented under the symbol of a giant ash-tree, the Yggdrasil, whose top reaches into the heavens, whose branches fill the world, and whose three roots extend into the three important spheres of existence outside the world of man. One root is where the Aesir dwell. Under this root is the Well of Urd, where the gods assemble in council. Another root reaches to the home of the Jötuns, or Rimthuser, under which is the Well of Mimer, the fountain of wisdom. The third root is in Niflheim, and under it is the terrible well Hvergelme, by which is found the snake Nidhoggr, which, together with many others, continually gnaws at the roots of the world tree, and seeks to destroy it.

Nidhoggr is the symbol of the destructive forces operating in the world.

Before Ragnarok evil passes all bounds. For three years there is perpetual strife. Brothers fight and kill each other, the ties of blood relationship are broken, morals are corrupted, and one person has no compassion for the other. Then follow three years of constant winter, the Fimbulwinter (the great winter). Finally Yggdrasil trembles, Fenre, the wolf, breaks his fetters, and the Midgardserpent comes out of the ocean, Surt, the fire demon, comes; Loke is free again and leads the sons of Muspell and other forces of destruction to the final battle with the gods on the plain Vigrid. Fenre kills Odin, but is in turn slain by the powerful Vidar. Thor and the Midgarserpent kill each other. Frey is slain by Surt; Ty fights against Hel's hound Garm, and both fall. Surt finally hurls fire over the earth; the sun grows dark, the earth sinks into the ocean, fire con-

sumes all—the world of strife and bloodshed has disappeared.

Out of the ocean rises a new green earth, where grain-fields grow without being sown, and where no evil exists.

"A hall I see on the heights of Gimle, brighter than the sun, and covered with gold; righteous men shall dwell there in endless happiness."

# CHAPTER XVI

## SAETER

One of the most interesting and special features of Norwegian national life is the *saeter*.

A saeter is a mountain dairy, where the Norwegian peasants spend their summer, pasturing their cattle and making butter and cheese. Each farm has its right of grazing certain parts of the mountains, or sometimes it happens that two or more smaller farms share a saeter between them.

When the spring work is finished on the farm a peculiar longing for the mountains comes both to the animals and the persons who are accustomed to spending their summers up in the mountain dairy. Preparations are then made for the migration to the saeter. It is a busy and

most interesting time, which has formed the subject of many pictures and poems.

The time for this migration depends on the state of the weather and the amount of snow which fell in the mountains during the winter. But in many districts it takes place about St. Hans' Day (St. John's Day, June 24th).

The procession at last is ready to start. The milkmaid or "budeie" usually leads, and the cattle, sheep, and goats driven by the shepherd boys follow. Then comes the farmer with the pack-horses laden with all the domestic goods needed by the women for two or three months' stay in the mountains. There are no wagon-roads, and the churns, milk-cans, food, as well as vast oval copper pans used for the making of cheese, must all be loaded on the back of the sure-footed, gentle fjord horses.

Usually this first trip goes only as far as the home saeter, which is located close enough to the farm to enable the dairy-

maid to take the herd home in case of bad weather. After they have stayed here a few weeks, another long journey is made to the high mountain saeter, where the warmest and longest part of the summer is spent. Then toward the fall they may have to move to the home saeter again on account of snow and cold weather, which prevents them from keeping the cattle in the high mountains.

There are two kinds of saeters. First, those that are nicely fitted up to accommodate tourists. Some of these are regular first-class mountain hotels. But the second-class, the most typical, are those that do not expect any tourist traffic.

It was a joyous day when I could make my first trip to the saeter. Starting from our home, we went with the cattle through narrow roads fenced off from cultivated fields, then through a forest of pine and spruce until we reached the open moors, where the only trees were dwarf birches and a kind of willow which grows

flat upon the ground, and is embedded in moss and juniper.

We started at five o'clock in the morning and about noon we reached the saeter, after traveling for many miles over tortuous and dangerous mountain paths. The special danger was in crossing the mountain torrents, which run high and swift in the spring. After a fordable place had been decided upon a halt was made and all the young sheep and goats had to be picked up and carried across. We all arrived safely at the saeter, which has a picturesque location in a valley close to a mountain lake. The buildings consist of a rude log hut with two rooms. Close by it runs a mountain brook and at a little distance are to be found sheds and pens and a barn with a hay-loft. The roofs of these buildings consist of rough planks on which are placed layers of birch-bark to fill in the cracks and on the top again are laid sods of earth to a thickness of about a foot. Grass and weeds soon

cover the roof, binding it together and keeping the rain out.

We enter the saeter hut and find the inside log walls lined with boards. As we are seated on a corner bench we notice that in another corner are two beds built into the wall, one above the other like berths, only wider. Standing out about two feet from the third corner is the immense large fireplace. Its floor space is a square five by five feet, built of stone and it covers about twenty-five square feet. The two sides of this square are walls reaching to the ceiling and built of heavy soapstone. These two sides form the back of the fireplace. The other two sides make the opening up to five or six feet from the floor. There the stone walls begin for these two sides and they join the two other walls of the fireplace, thus making a perfect chimney by the time they reach the ceiling. In this "peis," as such a fireplace is called, the log fire is built. From above, hung a

couple of cranes for the heavier kettles and on the sides are smaller pot-hooks. The cook is obliged to step up into such a large fireplace in order to do the cooking.

In this room were two windows each with four small panes of glass and two doors, one by which we had entered, and the other leading into a small room where the milk, cheese, and butter are kept. There were rows of tubs of all sizes, containing milk in all stages of sourness and sweetness.

On a larger saeter you will find a detached hut for the dairy work. Every dairymaid (or "budeie") takes great pride in keeping everything scrupulously clean, the floor, the shelves, the walls, wooden vessels, kettles, everything is scoured, therefore they are working hard all the long daylight hours, and the work is arduous. The "budeie" is in charge of the saeter. This position is sometimes occupied by the farmer's daughter, and if

it is a larger saeter, she may have one or two hired girls and a shepherd boy or two. Each morning the *saeter jente* (girl) must rise early and proceed with the milking of a large herd of cows, and in many places a flock of goats, and when they are taken into the pastures the work is by no means over; the milk must be strained and put by in the dairy, the vast copper pans for preparing the *myseost* (a brown sweet cheese) have to be set over the fire, and churning and other work makes the time pass quickly until the cattle come home for the evening milking.

Saeters are frequently built in groups for company's sake, but more often they stand alone and always close to a small lake or a stream of running water, a good supply being needed for all their cooking and scrubbing.

There is no doubt that the life at the saeter is a lonely one, for visitors are rare, except, perhaps, on Saturday evening. If

the "budeie" is a popular one, scores of young men will chance to meet on the saeter green. At such times the girls from the neighboring saeters would be sent for, and the night would be sure to end with a whirling spring dance. In the crowd will be found one or more who can play the violin. At such occasions the fair maidens dance gracefully as the leaping shadows, but the boys when going home must beware lest they are charmed by the mountain Hulder. (The Hulder is a kind of personification of the forest.) She is described as a maiden of wonderful beauty and only in this respect different from her mortal sisters, that she has a long cow's tail attached to her beautiful frame. This is the grief of her life. She is always longing for the society of the mortals, and often she ensnares young men by her beauty, but again and again the tail interferes by betraying her real nature. She is the protecting genius of the cattle.

Probably it is after such gatherings and dances that the life at the saeter, though health-giving in the highest degree, seems very monotonous, and the girls often long for the society which the life at the farm affords. They will get a horse and ride far enough to be able to see the valley below from the mountainside. This phase of saeter life has been immortalized by the plaintive melody which the great violinist Ole Bull wrote for Jörgen Moe's beautiful poem, "The Saeter-Maid's Sunday," of which the first and last stanza reads as follows:

"The sun is on high, now church-time is nigh,
and shorter the shadows are growing,
O that I were free, to-day and could be, to
church with the worshippers going!
When over the edge of yonder broad ledge, the
sun on his journey is climbing,
The church bells, I know, in valleys below, in
chorus are calling and chiming."

Then the poet describes the saeter maiden as she is sitting on the mountain-

side and looking down into the valley on a Sunday morning. She hears the far-off echo of the church bells and she wishes that she were free to go to church with her young friends and especially with her sweetheart, Odd.

She says in the last stanza:

"What boots it to bring my hymn-book and sing,
A psalm for my lonely devotion?
The loft is too high, the notes seem to die,
And vanish like drops in the ocean.
'Twould make me rejoice to mingle my voice
In singing with Odd and the others,
God grant it were near the end of the year!
Grant God I were home with my brothers!"

But personally I know of no place so enjoyable as the saeter. There you can see the most beautiful sunset on the lakes and snow-capped mountains. Then the dairymaid takes her "loor," a straight birch-bark horn, about six feet long and widening toward one end. On this instrument she will call the cattle home as follows:

"Come, children all,
That hear my call,
Brynlilda fair
With nut-brown hair!
Come, Little Rose,
Ere day shall close;
And Birchen Bough,
My own dear cow;
And Morning Pride,
And Sunny Side;—
Come, children dear,
For night draws near,
Come, children."

You hear their lowing answer as they come running, and a mixed sound of cow-bells, goat-bells, sheep-bells, and baying of dogs mingled with the hallooing and singing of the mountain girls. Life on the saeter with the invigorating air, picturesque scenery, peaceful work, and solemn stillness of the evening, after the work is done, is the happiest a Norwegian peasant knows.

Even King Oscar II, of Norway and Sweden, wrote the following appreciative and beautiful description of a visit which he made to a saeter in Sogn:

"How strange the saeter life and dwellings appear. How poor at first sight and yet how hearty and unexpectedly lavish is the hospitality which the simple children of the mountains extend to the weary travelers. Milk warm from the cows, fresh-churned butter, reindeer meat, and a couple of delicious trout which we have just seen caught in the lake below form a regal feast indeed, and spiced with the keen appetite which the air here creates, the meal can be equaled only by the luxury of reposing on a soft couch of fresh fragrant hay."

On our way home from the saeter, one of our company must take time to gather some of the beautiful flowers. The tiny rivulets which trickle down from the hills are lined with ferns and forget-me-nots, and in other places are to be found flowers of every hue, as the red Alpine catchfly, blue meadow cranesbill, hawksweed, wild radis, and about six thousand other species makes up the variegated flora of Norway.

Personally I was more interested in the berries. Norway produces and has of

late years exported immense quantities of wild fruits and berries.

The "blaabaer" or bilberry grows everywhere, and the "tyttebaer" or red whortleberry, which resembles the American cranberry, is found in many places, also the wild raspberries of delicious flavor abound in sheltered spots. But what we longed for most is the delicious "multebaer" (cloud-berry), which grows in swampy places on the mountains, particularly in the far north.

This is a juicy, yellow berry, larger in size than even the garden blackberry, and with a flavor which is much esteemed by most people, although it is so unusual that perhaps the taste for it must be acquired.

We found all we could take care of and enjoyed the berries and the trip immensely.

# CHAPTER XVII

## FJELDS AND FJORDS OF NORWAY

It is a modest assertion to say that no country of equal size with Norway can boast of such vastness and variety of sublime scenery.

This statement I have heard corroborated by hundreds of globe-trotters, whom I met while engaged in a large tourist business in Christiania.

When we speak about nightless days and dayless nights in Norway, you must not imagine that this is true concerning the whole country and for all seasons. No, like in other lands you have sunny and cloudy days, calm days, and stormy days when the winds howl and the rain descends.

And the change of weather may come very suddenly on account of the high

mountains and the large forests where the moisture-laden clouds cool sufficiently to give up their wet substance. But the moisture from the same cloud may fall in the form of rain in the deep valleys and in the form of snow on the high mountains, because here, among the perpetual snow and ice, it is sufficiently cold to change the rain into snow.

In order to see a landscape in its real beauty we usually think that it must be flooded with either sunshine or (I almost said moonshine) moonlight. This is not true of the great mountain districts whose rugged grandeur becomes more prominent with clouds and storm. What a grand music when you stand in such a wild landscape and listen to the mighty winds and surging torrents as they beat against the giant mountain walls! Or if you stand in a large forest of either pine or spruce where the wind seems to sway the bodies of the huge trees to the rhythm of mountain cascades while the trees clap

their hands and their crowns shout for joy.

Then you can imagine that you hear the voice of Thor. How it roars and re-echoes from mountain to mountain while his chariot wheels flash lightning amid these stalwart mountain peaks, that for centuries have stood as loyal sentinels around Mother Norway. Standing amid such grand surroundings one feels drawn toward a mighty, invisible power, and in place of thinking of Thor in the Norse Mythology, we feel more like exclaiming with the Christian poet:

> "How wonderful Creation is!
> The work that Thou didst bless!
> And, oh, what must THOU be like,
> Eternal Loveliness."

So grand and lovely is the nature in Norway that the globe-trotters used to say, "If you love the Swiss lakes and the Alpine mountains, then you will find the Norwegian fjords and the Jotunheim

mountains even more enchanting. If you long for the historic Rhine or the beautiful Hudson, just take a sail of one hundred and thirty-six miles on the Sogne Fjord."

The name fjord is analogous to the Scottish firth, both words having the same Norse derivation. A long fjord changes often in width from a broad bay or gulf to a narrow estuary. These Norse fjords are inlets of the North Sea, making deep incisions into the rocky cliffs, and are not only wild and romantic in their aspects, but the water is so transparent that it has perhaps no parallel except at the Thousand Islands.

Nothing can be more surprising and beautiful than the singular clearness of the sea on the western coast of Norway. As we passed slowly over the surface the bottom, which here was generally a white sand, was clearly visible with its minutest objects, although the depth was from twenty to twenty-five fathoms.

I have traveled a great deal and seen many wonderful things, but nothing has appeared to me so extraordinary as the inmost recesses of the deep, thus unveiled to the eye. Here the ocean is perfectly calm, as the western coast of Norway is surrounded by a perfect chain of one hundred and fifty thousand islands, and these form a natural and a most excellent breakwater.

Hanging over the gunwale of the boat, I gazed with wonder and delight upon the slowly-moving scene below. It was the shelter for many creatures unknown to man, and I could sometimes observe large fishes of singular shape gliding softly and leisurely through the watery thickets. They seemed perfectly unconscious that we were moving above them.

But this transparent calm water makes also a perfect mirror for everything that surrounds the fjord. The reflection of the mountains upon the surface of the water is often as well-defined as the rocks

themselves, so that when viewed at a short distance it is no easy matter to decide where the line is that separates the water from the shore.

This uncertainty when crossing one of the fjords in a boat has a most singular effect. Everything appears upside down; houses upset, trees growing in the wrong direction, men walking on their heads, cattle on their backs and the whole appearance having such an air of reality as to beguile the senses of one who is not accustomed to it.

Inspired by such beautiful scenes as you can see in one of the Norwegian fjords the poet wrote:

"Believe me, lady, when the Zephyrs bland
Floated our bark to this enchanted land,
These mighty rocks into the ocean thrown
Like giant thrones in a silver zone,—
Never did weary bark more sweetly glide,
Or rest its anchor in a lovelier tide."

# CHAPTER XVIII

## HOLY DAYS

### *Unique Christmas Customs in Norway*

THE celebration of Yule was practised in the northern countries long before they accepted the Christian religion.

This heathen celebration was a feast in honor of the sun, when, in January, it seemed to renew its strength and overcome the power of darkness (by rising high enough on the firmament to spread its golden rays over the country).

During the two weeks of this festival only the most necessary work was to be done. Implements with wheels, as wagons and the spinning-wheels, must rest. To let a wheel move was a sacrilege against the holy sun, as it might indicate that they wanted the sun-wheel to move faster.

Fish, bird, and beast must have perfect peace during the two-weeks' celebration of Yule. Therefore, every trap and snare must be taken away, and even the fish-nets must be removed from the ocean and rivers.

The great Christmas peace,—resting over the whole creation—must be observed, or woe be unto the transgressor. Selma Lagerlöf tells a beautiful story about a bear that was kind enough to give Christmas lodging in its winter den to a farmer, who was lost in the storm.

But when the farmer returned the next day with his gun in order to kill the bear, the bear killed the man, and even his wife thought this was a righteous punishment, because her husband had attempted to kill the bear before the Christmas festival was over.

From these twelve holy Christmas days the people took forebodings for the coming year. Every day they wrote on one of the big logs under the rafters a sign in-

dicating the kind of weather for that day. If it were stormy the first day, the whole first month of the next year would be stormy, etc. From this they have the proverb, " If the Christmas signs do not fail."

At the end of the twelve holy days came the climax of the great festival. The days were getting longer and a huge wheel would be rolled from farm to farm.

When the Christian religion was introduced, Christmas was celebrated a couple of weeks earlier than Yule, and thenceforth heathen and Christian customs were mixed.

All Christmas preparations must be finished before St. Thomas' Day, December 21st. By that time sufficient wood had to be cut to last over the two-weeks' celebration. If this were neglected, St. Thomas would come and take away the ax. Likewise, must all baking, brewing, and butchering be ready by that day, otherwise they will have some mishap

with everything. A cake was put on a shelf for St. Thomas before five o'clock Christmas Eve.

How we as children used to count the weeks, days, and finally the hours before Christmas! But when everything was in order in the house, barn, stable, and storehouse, and we could put up the Christmas sheaves for the birds, then we knew the great feast was drawing nigh.

It was now a question for every one to get a bath, put on clean underwear and the best clothes, including any new garment made for Christmas. Whereupon the whole family would gather in peace and contentment and partake of the Christmas Eve dinner which usually consisted of short ribs, different kinds of bread and cake, and rice pudding. Into the rice pudding had been put *one* almond. The one who found this almond on his plate would be the first one to get married. Every one had to leave some pudding on his plate for the dead, who

were certain to call during the night and get their share of the Christmas food. This was left on the table in great quantity and variety; but the dead do not eat like us mortals. They only want "the spirit of the food," hence when morning came everything looked as though it were untouched. It was, however, not only the good spirits that would visit the house Christmas night. The ghostly pranks of the evil spirits consisted in going from farm to farm and taking revenge on their enemies. This wild host brought fear and trembling wherever they went, for the transgressor was put through the most cruel punishment.

Even the Christmas ram or goats must be fed. In some places they would put some barley in a shoe and place it under the bed. Most of the time they could see that he had been eating a little during the night. But if the ram did not touch it, he was offended at something and would bring bad luck during the year. At a cer-

tain farm a cow died during the spring and the lady of the house was positive that it was her husband's fault because he had neglected to feed the Christmas ram.

In the parish, Elverum, they knew just where the Christmas ram lived. He moved from place to place during the winter until Christmas Eve, when he finally managed to get under the dining-room table. The last thing before they went to bed they would sweep very carefully under the table, and the first thing in the morning on Christmas day, they would see if the ram had left any grain there. If they found some it would be a good year, providing the grain was good. If this was poor, it would be a poor crop that year; but if they did not find any, it would be crop failure.

But it is not only the supernatural beings that must be provided with extra food at Christmas. In some places they would give the domestic animals an extra

meal about five o'clock Christmas Eve. In feeding them they would say, "Eat well, keep well; this is Christmas Eve."

Then they would feed the cattle salt out of a cow-bell. This would help them next summer to come home from the pasture in the evening of their own accord.

Different prognostications were taken from grain and salt that had been placed on the hot hearth Christmas Eve.

What has been stated in this article so far are mostly antiquated customs no longer to be found; but there is one nice custom in use, not only all over Norway, but the Norwegians who have emigrated to foreign countries usually practise it in their new homes. At Christmas I have seen in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, and North Dakota sheaves of grain put upon poles out in the yard, or on top of the barn. Then I knew that Norwegians were living there.

These sheaves are the largest and best

that could be selected at threshing time. They should be put up on a spruce pole on which a large tuft of branches must be left at the top. This makes a nice place where the birds can rest after their meals. The snow should also be removed from a large circle on the lawn, and on this bare spot the birds will dance between meals, and thus get up their appetites for the next repast.

When everything was finished Christmas Eve, the dishes washed and the house set in order for Christmas day, and all the old brooms had been carefully hidden in order to prevent the witches from riding them Christmas night; when for a similar purpose the fire-shovel and tongs had been put away; then the head of the household would go out to see if there were many sparrows in the Christmas sheaf. If there were many, it would be a good corn year; but if a sparrow sat down in the sheaf before all the work connected with putting it up had been

finished, it was an omen that some one in the family would soon die.

On Christmas Eve, when darkness had conquered the light, then the fear of evil beings crept upon one. In order to drive away the witches and other uncanny beings, they went out in the yard and fired a shot. This has been transformed into "shooting in Christmas," or a Christmas salute. The young men go from farm to farm and sneak up close to the window while shooting, in order to make the people quake.

But they could not be offended, as such a visit was considered an honor, and the husbandman would go and invite them in for refreshments.

As it was commonly believed that the witches would be riding around in the air on their brooms that evening, the people were afraid that they might come down the chimney. In order to prevent this they would burn dry spruce, which would send out so many sparks, that it would

keep away the uninvited guests, or if one put salt in the fire it would serve the same purpose.

It was not considered safe to go to bed that evening without leaving a light burning, because all evil beings were usually active on this holy night. Sometimes they made an extra large candle that would last all night, and this they left burning on the hearth with a circle of salt around it. Both the candle and the salt were consecrated.

But in most places they would burn the "Yule Log," as all evil shuns the bright light. This custom of burning the "Yule Log" was in olden times transferred from Norway into England.

Many other safety devices were resorted to on Christmas Eve. Steel had to be put over the stable and barn doors; and with a brush dipped in tar, the sign of the cross was made over the different doors.

These customs, mostly used in the rural

districts, are now passing away; but of those that are still in use one might be mentioned.

They leave a light burning in the window all Christmas night as a sign that any traveler is welcome for food and shelter.

The table is set all the time during the two weeks of Christmas festivities, and visitors as well as members of the family can help themselves at any time to food and drinks.

## CHAPTER XIX

### FESTIVALS: SEVENTEENTH OF MAY, AND ST. JOHN'S EVE

THE Norwegian peasant has many festivals. These are necessary for relaxation, as these people's life is very strenuous.

The seventeenth of May is Norway's National Independence Day. It corresponds to America's Fourth of July, and is celebrated in honor of the drawing up of the constitution at Eidsvold, in 1814. All over Norway this day is observed with great enthusiasm, from Christiania to North Cape and from the Swedish border to the North Sea, flags are flying, salutes are fired, bands are playing, processions are marching and larger or smaller congregations gather and listen attentively to inspiring patriotic orations.

Often have I been called upon by my countrymen in America to speak at such festivals; but my most vivid recollections are from the celebrations in my home parish and from those held in Christiania in which our athletic society participated. Here I heard a seventeenth of May oration delivered by the man who in his days ranked as the world's greatest orator—Björnstjerne Björnson.

*St. John's Festivals or Midsummer Fires—June 24th.*

In Norway, probably more than in any other European country, many primitive customs and relics of bygone superstitions have been preserved. I regret to say, however, that they are rapidly dying out. One of these customs worth keeping up is the celebration of the Midsummer, or St. John's Day fires. In Germany this day is known as "Johannisfeuer" and in France "Feu de S. Jean"; but in Sweden, Denmark and Norway we call it "Sankt Hans." St. John the Bap-

tist is the patron of St. John's Day. As we find this festival both in Persia and among the Celtic and Teutonic people, it no doubt springs from religious rites prior to Christianity. At that time it was most likely a festival to the sun, held on the sun's highest day. Many of the people in those days were sun-worshippers and the fire used in the festival to-day is a sort of image or symbol of the sun.

As a child I used to long for the Midsummer Fires. In many rural places the ceremonies begin with a mock wedding. A girl, about twelve years of age, is dressed as a bride with the Norwegian bridal crown and followed by a procession of other girls. The whole procession is led by a fiddler, who plays a march as he would in the case of a real Norse wedding. The little bride corresponds to the May Queen in an American May-Day festival.

One of the last summers before my emigration from Norway, I lived on an

island in the Christiania fjord. At this place a group of us prepared a St. John's festival. We built an immense fire of logs and many old tar-barrels. The light was reflected far over the water, and could be seen both from the city and from hundreds of summer resorts on the surrounding islands. Beautiful was the sight of the many and different kinds of boats, which, from all directions, swiftly skimmed over the water to join our celebration. From the boats floated the strains of different musical instruments and the air being perfectly calm, the music on the water sounded charmingly. All the boats carried young men and maidens, and many of the latter were dressed in national costume. Below our great bonfire was a large level meadow. In the centre of this we built a smaller fire, and the dancing around it was continued all night.

The nights in Norway, at this season of the year, are so light that one may read

until two o'clock in the morning without the use of artificial light.

On the many islands surrounding us were built hundreds of fires on the highest promontories and from afar one could observe shadow-like figures dancing as fairies around the fires. The spectator at such a festival enjoys the frolics, sports, and pastimes, and the various beautiful folk dances, as well as the spectacular sport by the boys and young men of leaping through the flame. This practice is believed by some writers to be a far-off reflex of the sacrifice of children by passing them through the fire. Of the same origin is the ordeal by fire: "As Abraham's readiness to sacrifice Isaac was accounted to him for righteousness; so is the readiness of an accused person to offer himself as a sacrifice to the deity supposed to show his innocence; and, as in the case of Isaac, the divinity is expected to intervene in order to prevent the completion of the sacrifice."

## CHAPTER XX

### RENOWNED MUSICIANS, AND FOLK-MUSIC IN NORWAY

You do not feel like singing when the day is cold, and dark, and dreary; but when the sun shines and everything is light and cheery, it is natural to hum and sing. Therefore, in sunny Italy and other southern countries, the people are humming and singing more than they do in Norway. The Norsemen have a shadow of sadness and melancholy cast over them by the powerful effects of the climate and by the stern and rugged nature. Songs are, as you know, outward expressions of people's inward emotions. If you were in the church to attend a funeral your emotions would not be the same as if you were there at a wedding. Consequently you would not feel like

singing the same kind of songs at these different occasions.

The songs of the South are light and lively like the people; but the songs of the Norwegians are heavy, expressing deep and sombre reflections in minor chords that suggest sadness. For "the mighty ocean that beats upon the shore, the dark fjords with their overhanging forbidding cliffs, the noisy waterfalls, the miles of blue-green pine and fir, the endless wastes of mountains and ice with the crackling flames of the northern lights, the long night of winter—all the Titanic forces with which Nature has endowed the country," make the people reserved and self-contained. Their emotions do not find expression in song to the same extent as do the lighter and more demonstrative natures of the southern nations.

But the people nevertheless possess greater musical feeling and lyric power than perhaps the majority of the other nations in Europe. Their national music

is admirable for its original force and ever-varying moods, which reflect, as in a kaleidoscope, their warm, deep feeling.

In the remote and isolated valleys and rural districts of Norway, there has grown a pure folk-music as characteristic of the land as her mountains. The great value of this folk-music comes from the fact that it exhibits the real atmosphere of the land of their origin. Unfortunately, some of these musical gems were lost before the attempt was made to make a record of them. This work was first started by the great organist and composer, L. M. Lindeman (1812–1887).

Beginning in 1848, he collected many hundreds of songs, ballads, dances, and hymns, and thereby erected to his own memory an undying monument. The collecting of Norwegian national music has of late years been continued by Mr. C. Elling.

The characteristics of this folk-music is stated by Mr. V. H. Siewers as follows:

"There is in this music an infinity of varying moods, rhythms and colors. Every one of the harp strings is tuned. They sing of heroic exploits in heathen ages, of the kings and warriors of the Middle Ages, and of the beautiful 'huldre' (hill fairies), of the 'draug' (water spirit), who presages the destruction of the fishermen, of the brownie and the water-sprite. There are also love-songs so deep and ardent that they have few equals, sarcastic comic songs, and children's songs as pure and innocent as the sleeping child itself."

"Stev" is an impressive kind of popular poetry characteristic of Norse music. It is a little four-lined stanza of most varied substance. It may be used to express coarse ridicule and grotesque humor, or warm, intense feeling. The stave is frequently used in the mountain districts for social entertainment, in the form of alternate singing—a duel in song.

In "Gunnar" Mr. Boyesen gives an excellent sample of the interesting *stev*.

As an introduction he writes a charm-

ing description of how young and old, lads and lassies, thronged eagerly about the couple in the dance-hall in order to hear the *stev*.

Ragnhild, "as she stood there, in the warm flush of the torch-light, with her rich, blond hair waving down over her shoulders, and with that veiled brightness in her eyes, her beauty sprang upon you like a sudden wonder, and her presence was inspiration. And Gunnar saw her; she loved him; what cared he for all the world beside? Proudly he raised his head and sang:

GUNNAR. There standeth a birch in the lightsome lea,
RAGNHILD. In the lightsome lea;
GUNNAR. So fair she stands in the sunlight free,
RAGNHILD. In the sunlight free;
BOTH. So fair she stands in the sunlight free.

R. High up on the mountain there standeth a pine,
G. There standeth a pine;
R. So staunchly grown and so tall and fine,

G. So tall and fine;
BOTH. So staunchly grown and so tall and fine.

G. A maiden I know as fair as the day,
R. As fair as the day;
G. She shines like the birch in the sunlight's play,
R. In the sunlight's play;
BOTH. She shines like the birch in the sunlight's play.

R. I know a lad in the spring's glad light,
G. In the spring's glad light;
R. Far-seen as the pine on the mountain height,
G. On the mountain height;
BOTH. Far-seen as the pine on the mountain height.

G. So bright and blue are the starry skies,
R. The starry skies;
G. But brighter and bluer that maiden's eyes,
R. That maiden's eyes;
BOTH. But brighter and bluer that maiden's eyes.

R. And his have a depth like the fjord, I know,
G. The fjord, I know;
R. Wherein the heavens their beauty show,
G. Their beauty show;
BOTH. Wherein the heavens their beauty show.

G. The birds each morn seek the forest-glade,
R. The forest-glade;
G. So flock my thoughts to that lily maid,
R. That lily maid;
BOTH. So flock my thoughts to that lily maid.

R. The moss it clingeth so fast to the stone,
G. So fast to the stone;
R. So clingeth my soul to him alone,
G. To him alone;
BOTH. So clingeth my soul to him alone.

G. Each brook sings its song, but forever the same,
R. Forever the same;
G. Forever my heart beats that maiden's name,
R. That maiden's name;
BOTH. Forever my heart beats that maiden's name.

R. The plover hath but an only tone,
G. An only tone;
R. My life hath its love, and its love alone,
G. Its love alone;
BOTH. My life hath its love, and its love alone.

G. The rivers all to the fjord they go,
R. To the fjord they go;
G. So may our lives then together flow,
R. Together flow;
BOTH. O, may our lives then together flow!

THE NATIONAL INSTRUMENTS OF NORWAY are the Hardanger violin, the Lur, and the Langeleik. These have played a leading rôle in the development of the national music, as they have been the principal instruments in the musical life of the people in the rural districts.

The langeleik is an old form of zither. It has a long, flat body with sound-holes and seven or more strings, which are struck with a plectrum. But the tone is weak, the modulations few, and the effect somewhat monotonous.

The Hardanger violin is higher and more arched in its build than the ordinary violin. The scroll is generally a dragon's head, and the body is richly ornamented with ivory, mother-of-pearl, and carvings.

Beneath the four upper strings (which are variously tuned according to the music they wish to produce),—and under the finger-board, there are four, sometimes more, sympathetic strings of fine steel wire.

By the aid of this instrument, the country people make their improvised musical impressions of nature, interspersed with descriptive sketches of midsummer with the dawn of morning and the glow of evening, *huldre's* song, thrush's trill, or the ringing of marriage-bells.

NATIONAL DANCES are often danced with vocal instead of instrumental music. The dancers are attentive and responsive to the words as they are sung.

Usually, however, the dances are too lively for vocal music, and the fiddle is brought into play.

The most popular of the folk-dances in the rural districts of Norway are the springdans, polka, and the halling.

These Norwegian *national dances* have a natural and bold character, which gives them considerable musical worth. The springdans, so called to distinguish it from the ganger (or walking dance) is in three-four measure, and it has vigorous

evolutions and gyrations. It is characterized by a striking combination of binary and ternary rhythms, and a progressive animation very exciting to the hearers.

"THE KING OF THE VIOLIN," OLE BULL, is a personage with whom I have been familiar since my childhood. Many were the stories my father told me about this talented boy, who was so interested in music that when a mere child he would steal out of bed and play his violin softly in the night-time.

But his father discovered him, and in his anger he broke the boy's violin. He soon secured another instrument, and in this he was far more interested than in his school work.

The old rector of the Latin School understood the boy's love for music, and one day he said to Ole, "Take your fiddle in earnest, boy, and don't waste your time here." He followed this advice and be-

came a violinist, concerning whom no less an authority than Joachim said, "No other artist in our time has possessed his poetic fire."

The Violin King, Ole Bull, was born in Bergen, Norway, 1810. His life and labors are so world-renowned that I shall take space for only some of the most interesting incidents in his remarkable career.

Ole Bull is described as a tall, well-built and unusually strong man, with a sharp, keen look, black brows over bright, glad eyes full of life and a firm mouth and dimpled chin; a man who could do much and suffer much.

Ole Bull is the idol of so great a master as Grieg. Mr. Finck tells us, in his most interesting life of Grieg, how as a boy "something like an electric current seemed to pass through the lad when the world-famed violinist shook his hand, though the boy thought it peculiar that Ole Bull (whom he regarded as a god)

could smile and joke just like ordinary mortals."

On two or three occasions 'Ole Bull nearly lost his life through the great love for his violin. The first time was in Paris, where he tried to drown himself in the Seine when he found that his excellent violin had been stolen; but he was rescued, and a wealthy lady gave him another Guarneri.

Through a peculiar fit of pique on the part of Madame Malibran, Ole Bull had the opportunity to score his first great success.

Sara Bull, his sister, tells us that Madame Malibran had been engaged for a series of nights by the directors of the leading theatre in Bologna. But she had made a condition which compelled them to give the use of the theatre without charge to the great violinist De Beriot, with whom she was to appear in two concerts.

The Marquis Lampieri, who was rec-

ognized as one of the greatest authorities in the musical world, persuaded these artists to appear at the same time. All was arranged and announced when, by chance, Malibran heard that De Beriot was to receive a smaller sum than had been stipulated for herself. Piqued at this, she feigned illness, and De Beriot declared that he was suffering from a sprained thumb.

Ole Bull had been a fortnight in Bologna, living in an upper room, in a poor hotel. Secluded from society, he spent the days in writing out his concerto; when evening came, the wonderful tones of his violin sounded from the open windows to the delight of the passers-by.

One evening the celebrated Colbran Rossini's first wife was passing Casa Soldali and heard those strains. "It must be a violin," she said, "but a divine one, which will be a substitute for De Beriot and Malibran." And she went and told Lampieri on the night of the concert.

Ole Bull, full of weariness, had retired to bed early, when he was roused by a rap at the door. It was Lampieri! He asked Ole Bull to improvise for him, and after listening for a while, cried, "Malibran may now have her headaches!"

He hurried Ole Bull to the theatre, where, in one of the boxes, sat the Grand Duke of Tuscany, and De Beriot with his hand in a sling. Ole Bull was almost unnerved, but he chose his own composition, and the desperation which compelled him to shut his eyes, made him play with an *abandon* and charm which at once captivated his audience.

The final piece was to be a violin solo. The director was doubtful, but Ole Bull was by this time quite composed, and played so divinely that his hearers wept.

Perhaps the most memorable of his concert tours was that which he undertook in 1853 with the girl soprano, Adelina Patti. Reports of the wonderful art of this child

had gone forth, and as one of the American critics remarked, "Nothing short of the testimony we have seen could make us believe such a thing possible. Yet the whole artistic life of Ole Bull is a guarantee that nothing but sterling merit can take part in his concerts."

This series of concerts were given by Ole Bull for the purpose of raising funds for a patriotic project, namely, the establishment of a large Norwegian colony in Pennsylvania. Mr. Bull said that this should be "A new Norway, consecrated to liberty, baptized with independence, and protected by the Union's mighty flag." But after the forests had been cleared, and eight hundred settlers made their homes there, he found that he had been swindled. The title to the land he had paid for was fraudulent, and all that remained of his earnings was devoured by the resulting lawsuits. And when he returned to Norway, his countrymen unjustly accused him of having speculated

ruthlessly at the expense of those who had confided in him.

But with his violin Ole Bull made another fortune, and founded at his own expense a new national theatre in Bergen. He also tried to found a Norse Music Academy in Christiania. "This academy," writes Jonas Lie, "was not founded; but the seed—the thought—was at that time planted. Since then it has grown and matured, and to-day we have a body of artists and composers, and quite another musical culture ready to receive it."

Ole Bull's patriotic aspirations and services were duly acknowledged by all his countrymen at the time of his death in 1880. The King sent a telegram of condolence to the widow, expressing his personal, as well as the national, loss, and Björnstjerne Björnson said in an address delivered before thousands of mourners, "Patriotism was the creative power in his life. When he established the Norse the-

atre, assisted Norse art, and helped the National Museum, his mighty instrument singing for other patriotic ends; when he helped his countrymen and others wherever he found them, it was not so much for the object, or the person, but for the honor of Norway."

Grieg played the organ at the funeral services, and his remarks, which followed Björnson's, are very beautiful: "Because more than any other thou wast the glory of our land; because more than any other thou hast carried our people with thee up toward the bright heights of Art; because thou wast more than any other a pioneer of our young national music; more, much more, than any other, the faithful, warm-hearted conqueror of all hearts, because thou hast planted a seed which shall spring up in the future, and for which coming generations shall bless thee, with the gratitude of thousands upon thousands. For all this, in the name of our Norse memorial art, I lay

this laurel wreath on thy coffin. Peace be with thy ashes."

On a glass-covered table, in Bergen Museum, lies a beautiful gold laurel wreath with berries of the purest pearls. Alongside rests the violin the great master so loved. The strings are broken. The hand, that with such magic touch won from the instrument all that it could give, is now turned into dust; but the music lives and will live for aye.

ANOTHER WORLD-FAMOUS NORWEGIAN MUSICIAN IS EDWARD GRIEG.

In 1843 he was born in Bergen, the birthplace of his musical idol and friend, Ole Bull.

Grieg's great talent was inherited from his mother, Gesine Judith Hagerup. Her skill was so great that she was able to appear as soloist at concerts in Bergen. His mother began to teach him music when he was only six years old, and she

succeeded beyond her fondest hopes. Grieg says:

"It was not easy sailing at first. I had to practise just what was unpleasant. . . . There was no trifling with her if I spent the time in dreaming at the piano instead of busying myself with the lesson set. . . . Had I not inherited my mother's irrepressible energy, as well as her musical capacity, I should never in any respect have succeeded in passing from dreams to deeds."

It was Ole Bull who discovered the great musical talent in the young lad. Concerning this, Grieg tells as follows:

"When he heard I had composed music I had to go to the piano; all my entreaties were in vain. I cannot now understand what Ole Bull could find at that time in my juvenile pieces. But he was quite serious, and talked quietly to my parents. The matter of their discussion was by no means disagreeable to me. For suddenly Ole Bull came to me, shook me in his own way, and said, 'You are to go to Leipzig, and become a musician!'

Everybody looked at me affectionately, and I understood just one thing—that a good fairy was stroking my cheeks, and that I was happy."

At the Conservatory in Leipzig, Grieg had such famous teachers as Plaidy, Wenzel, and Moscheles. Grieg suddenly realized that several of his fellow students progressed more quickly than he did. He did not work as hard as they did; but from now on he resolved to submit to the drudgery as they did, and he went from one extreme to the other.

He worked day and night, with the result that he collapsed in the spring of 1860 with lung trouble, which weakened his health for life. By mere will-power he passed a creditable examination that same year.

When Grieg was twenty-one he was encouraged by the famous Niels W. Gade to write a symphony. In the same year he enjoyed the privilege of making excursions with Ole Bull where Bull, as a child,

had fancied that he heard nature sing and the bluebells ring. Ole Bull's motto was, " My calling is Norse music." This same love of Norse music he now inculcated in his talented young companion, as they played together and visited the homes of the peasants and heard their music.

In the chain of Norwegian national music there are three links. The first one is Halfdan Kjerulf, the second, Rikard Nordraak,—and these two had a decided influence upon the third link, Edward Grieg.

At the age of twenty-five Grieg composed his Sonata (Opus 8). After reading it Franz Liszt wrote to him from Rome, and invited him cordially to spend some time at Weimar. The Government granted Grieg a sum of money which enabled him to visit Rome and meet Liszt. After Liszt had given him a grand exhibition of his own tremendous musical power, he turned to Grieg and said jaunt-

ily, "Now let us go on with the sonata." Grieg continues:

"You must bear in mind, in the first place, that he had never played it nor heard it played; and in the second place, that it was a sonata with a violin part, now above, now below, independent of the pianoforte part. And what does Liszt do? He plays the whole thing root and branch, violin and piano,—nay, more, for he played fuller, more broadly. The violin got its due right in the middle of the piano part. He was literally over the whole piano at once, without missing a note, and how he did play!"

Grieg left the house strangely hot in his head, but with the consciousness of having spent two of the most interesting hours in his life.

Grieg has brought it about that Norse music, depicting Norwegian moods and life, has entered into every music-room of the whole world. Probably he is best known to the outside world by his grand and inspired music to Ibsen's Peer Gynt.

Was it not Robert Schumann who said, " Grieg is recognized far beyond his native country as one of the few masters who have enriched music with new means of melody and harmonic expression, and created a national art distinguished by poetic feeling and the charm of many moods "?

# CHAPTER XXI

## WINTER SPORTS

### *Skiing and Skating on the "Playground of the North"*

PEOPLE not familiar with the climate of Norway generally believe that it is extremely severe—as that of Siberia for instance. This is not so, however, for along her coast flows a branch of the Gulf Stream, giving Norway a climate which makes the winter sports very pleasant.

### *Skiing*

is the national sport of Norway and is enjoyed by old and young of both sexes.

Skis (skees) are a peculiar kind of snowshoes—from six to nine feet long and about four inches wide. They are made of tough wood, such as ash or hick-

ory, and are polished smooth on the underside to make them glide easily over the snow. The front end is pointed and curved upward, and from end to end the ski is slightly arched and will give a spring when you put your weight on it. In the centre are "bindings" by which you secure them to your feet.

The Norwegian boy (and girl, too,) learns to use skis almost as soon as he is able to walk. As the snow comes long before Christmas and stays till March or April, ample opportunity is offered to enjoy this health-giving and most fascinating of all sports.

In Lom, Norway, the parish where I was born, skiing made an easy mode of travel, hence we learned it as children.

It was great fun sliding down hills, small ones at first, then longer and steeper ones until we had mastered them all. And then came the thrill of ski-jumping! Selecting a long and moderately steep hill we would build of snow in the middle

of the hill a "take-off" or platform and begin practising. Starting near the top and fast losing confidence as we approached the take-off the leap was made in a half-hearted manner, and thud! you would land on your back with your skis pointed skyward, and enveloped in a cloud of snow while your playmates would scream with glee. But after a few tumbles one would gain confidence and control, and the leaps became bolder and surer. Many of my playmates while still in "knickers" could do sixty to eighty feet and retain their balance till the foot of the hill was reached.

Unlike many other sports, the skier is not confined to any limited field of action. He is free to go wherever snow covers the ground—over fields and frozen lakes, through forests or up the mountainside till the highest peaks are reached. With his knapsack well filled with provisions he may make long excursions into strange valleys or unexplored mountain regions,

and the sights that meet his gaze are never to be forgotten.

Christiania, the capital of Norway, has an ideal situation for winter sports. There one may count on snow and ice for about five months; and long after the snow has disappeared from the city streets it lies deep all over the surrounding country.

The city playgrounds are flooded for skating, and here with no danger of breaking through the ice, old and young may safely enjoy themselves even after dark. At Frogner and Bislet are great skating-rinks where international matches are held, and in the hills surrounding the city may be found excellent slopes for ski-jumping, and roads for tobogganing.

We will go some sunny winter Sunday with the laughing noisy crowds that are making their way up toward the heights! Mirth and laughter are heard everywhere. The sharp cold air brings the

color to pale cheeks. There we notice an old, experienced skier, perhaps over sixty years of age, and by his side his six-year-old grandson, shuffling along as well as he can. Life and brightness are added to the scene by the many handsome women and girls; for here they are seen at their best, radiant in their most becoming costumes, and glowing with health and energy. Hand in hand, in close succession, couple after couple sweep down the slopes. If one falls, it may result in a general overthrow; but there are no scowling looks on that account. They help one another up and dash off again. Good-fellowship, patience, and hardiness are developed under such conditions.

Late in the afternoon, when darkness begins to fall, torches light up the woods, their flickering flame throwing ruddy reflections over the white ground and the brown tree-trunks, and sending out sparks into the darkness. Or at other times the pale light of the moon casts long

fantastic shadows among the branches, and illumines the path of the skiers. It is the poetry of the northern winter evening in its most beautiful and delicate form. The day is ended round the blazing fire in some sanatorium or ski-hut, and merry laughter makes the rafters ring.

### *Holmenkol Day*

The Holmenkol-races at the end of February form the climax of the skiing season. This is Norway's greatest and most important ski meet where the youth of the country compete for the highest honors in this field of sport. It would require too much space to describe this meet in its entirety, so we shall just give a brief outline of the jumping competition.

This part of the meet always arouses admiration and enthusiasm. No one, who has not seen it, would believe what the competitors achieve. To see the skier at tremendous speed taking the leap from

the high take-off, and after describing a long arc in the air reach the earth once more at a distance of about two hundred feet lower down, makes one marvel that he can escape without broken limbs. Can you imagine a person falling from a fourth-story window without being killed? Here they drop from as great a height, while the length of the jump from the take-off to the place where they again touch the ground is up to two hundred and thirty-five feet (record). Still, most of them manage to keep on their feet when landing and continuing till the level at the foot of the hill is reached.

It is impossible not to admire the courage, strength, and coolness that this must require; and the applause that greets each successful bold leap resounds among the hills.

But if a man falls amid a cloud of snow, while the points of his skis describe circles in the air or snap off like match-wood, he is greeted with shouts of laughter; and

if a competitor is seen to draw back at the leap, and collapse like a bundle of rags he is jeered at without mercy.

The Holmenkol Hill is used for this contest only and is closed off shortly after the races. But before this is done the little boys, anxious to try their skill, swarm all over the hill, and his is the thrill of a lifetime who can boast of having "cleared" "Holmenkolbakken."

Skating is another very popular sport in Norway, and Norwegians have led the world in skating for half a century.

As a young boy, I used to skate to and from school, and when I went to high school, twenty-one miles from my home, I used to skate home at week-ends. This round trip of forty-two miles gave me splendid training, and laid the foundation for my future success as a fast skater.

At the age of nineteen I won the national championship for the distance of one mile. Then I stopped, feeling that the game was not worth the powder.

That was the golden age in Norway's history of skating when Axel Paulsen and later Harald Hogen held the world's championship for skating on all distances, and Mr. Werner had no peer in any country for fancy skating.

Then for a time skiing robbed skating of many of its devotees. But in recent years Oscar Mathiesen's victories throughout Europe and his final victory over the American, Bobby MacLean, have restored skating to its former popularity.

The great skating rinks at Frogner and Bislet, near Christiania, are divided into two circles. The outer circle is for distance skaters practising for championship races, and in the inner circle are seen a motley crowd of ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls devoting themselves to ordinary and figure-skating with the addition of flirtation—such as takes place so naturally and spontaneously when one is gliding around on skates.

This graceful exercise is becoming more and more popular, and the effect, in the evening, of the ever moving figures beneath the arc lights, and the glow of colored lanterns has a charm of its own that appeals to all.

Of all the other Norse sports space will not permit us to speak.

## CHAPTER XXII

### NORWEGIAN LITERATURE

My father telling me of the old Vikings, said that they spoke a language which is no longer used in Norway, but it is used in a modern form in Iceland. This language was called Old Norse or Icelandic. "But," said he, "you understand that a language could not move from one country to another without the people who spoke it migrated or moved. And how the Old Norse was transplanted from Norwegian to Icelandic soil forms a most interesting history, which I shall tell in a few words."

This takes us back to the time when Harold the "Fair-Haired" conquered about thirty-one earls and kinglets of the country and federated them into the Norse Kingdom. You will remember,

that at that date the Holy Roman Empire, though recently organized, was already going to pieces; Russia was merely a principality; and Denmark and England (under Alfred the Great), were the only nations of Europe that have had an unbroken history of more than a thousand years. From this you will understand that Norway is one of the oldest sovereign states in Europe.

Harold was only a boy ten years of age, when his father died and in 860 he became king of one of the small kingdoms into which Norway was divided. The neighboring small kings thought it would be rather easy to defeat this young boy and steal his kingdom, but fortunately for Harold he had good counselors and a strong will-power and in twelve years he gained the victory over all of them.

Harold would probably never have become the supreme ruler of the whole country, but for a young girl named Gyda. When Harold wooed her she re-

fused proudly saying that the only man for her would be one who could conquer all the other petty kings in Norway and thus become the sole ruler of the whole country. If she could not find a man who was able to do that, she would never marry. Thus she set Harold a new and difficult task; but he made an oath that he would neither cut nor comb his hair or beard until this great work was finished. He defeated one after another of these small kings, until finally he conquered the last ones in the bloody battle of Hafesfjord, 872. At this place one can see today a large shaft called the Harold monument. This tells the silent story of his final victory. Now he was king over all Norway and Gyda was ready to marry him; but before the wedding the barber must have had quite a job to cut the hair and beard that had not even been combed for twelve years. When it was cut, they called him Harold the Fair-Haired, and up to date he is known by that name.

Now came the great wedding feast; it lasted over one week and all who came had plenty to eat and drink. Then they would sing and play and narrate interesting experiences and strange stories from their battles at home and abroad, and when the drinking had made them gay and giddy they would enter into all kinds of games and sports becoming to the brave and valiant Vikings.

But the rule of Harold was not welcomed by the people, who had been accustomed to govern themselves. Harold forced the earls to acknowledge his overlordship and although he permitted them to administer justice in their own provinces, collect taxes, and maintain petty armies subject to his command, yet many of them were dissatisfied and left the country. The same is true of the peasants who lost their former land tenure, as the land was declared the property of the king, and the personal tax which the king introduced was nicknamed "nose tax."

From this time Norse Colonization begins, as well as the Viking ravages. Many of the wealthiest and best educated people, including the earls and petty kings, left Norway. Some went out as sea-robbers. This was strictly forbidden by Harold in his own kingdom, but against foreign countries such ravages were considered both legitimate and becoming for warriors and gentlemen.

These Norsemen went to the Faroe Islands, the Hebrides, the Orkney, Iceland, and Shetland Isles, England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Italy, and America. Those who left Norway in order to build new colonies took along everything they had, even their log houses and furniture. In Iceland they formed a very strong colony and between this and the mother country was carried on a lively intercourse.

But, you say, what connection is there between Norse literature and Harold the Fair-Haired and all the people who be-

came dissatisfied and left Norway? They are connected as cause and effect. The proud men who left Norway have written the great Saga literature during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In their new homes in Iceland they had the four things which are essential for a literary activity; namely, time, money, ability, and the right motive power. Writing is often non-productive financially, therefore, it requires time and capital, as well as the ability to write. But most of all, they had the right motive power. In their bleak, bare, and cold Iceland home they were seized with a longing and a love for their native country as never before. Their new homes were poor and inhospitable compared with their former Norse homes, and the social activities on Iceland were limited and primitive compared to their regal feasts among their many friends and kinsfolk in Norway.

This longing and love for their native

land and former social environment created in them a glowing patriotism. As the blessings of health are more appreciated by a person when he is laid on the sick bed, so the blessings of their Norway homes were now fully appreciated by these lonely people on the little ice-covered Iceland.

Such was the mental attitude of these Saga writers when they commenced to collect the records of their race. They wrote about the great heroes among their fathers and the history of the gods they worshipped. They gave a full account of their laws and customs, as well as the details of their daily lives, their travels, battles and early colonizations. They wrote in the Old Norse language and their productions were excellent both from a historical and literary viewpoint.

Any nation might be proud to own such men as Are (called Frode or the Wise) who died in 1148; or Karl Jonsson, Sturla Fordsson, and above all

Snorre Sturlasson. Snorre's great history of his race, which is called "Heimskringla" (The World's Circle) tells of the Northman from the earliest and legendary days down to the year 1177. It is one of the most picturesque and on the whole most truthful records of a nation's history to be met with in Europe. Several other works were written in the Norse language and in Norway during this period. In many respects the most remarkable one of these is "Konge Speilet" (The King's Mirror), a book of maxims regarding social life and manners which cast a flood of light on the period to which it belongs.

In the same way we find the religious life of the people of that time reflected in preserved books of homilies, and these are written in Old Norse, in spite of the fact that Latin was the theological language in all countries at that time. In the Sagas we find the essential facts concerning the discovery of America by Lief the

Lucky—five hundred years before Columbus rediscovered it.

There are to be found excellent English translations of the Sagas and in university circles they are widely read and studied. It is difficult to produce a growing literature in a language which is spoken by so few people that the demand for books is not large enough to pay the cost of production. Another factor which in the middle of the fourteenth century paralyzed the national literature and almost the whole nation's life was the desolating scourge of the Black Death. In some parishes the whole population died.

But how did the Old Norse language die? By having substituted for it a new language, namely the Danish.

When a whole country gives up its language it is usually conquered by a stronger nation and obliged to adopt its language. This was the case, for instance, when Greece conquered Egypt. Not so with

Norway. It has never been conquered by any nation. It was united with Denmark about the middle of the fifteenth century through the Norwegian king Olaf, who was also elected king of Denmark. This union, which continued for nearly four hundred years, was a dark period for Norway both intellectually and commercially. The reasons for Norway giving up her own language may be summarized as follows:

*First,* Norway did not have her own university, therefore all who wanted a professional training were obliged to attend the university of Copenhagen. When these students returned to their native country they used the Danish language, at least in their written productions.

*Secondly,* The Protestant Reformation completed the process, as with it came the translation and distribution of the Bible in the Danish language. Thus Danish became the theological language and was

used even in the popular religious instructions in Norway.

*Thirdly,* The Norse king and most of the civil officers were Danish, hence this became the language of the state.

It was only in law that the native language of Norway held out against the intrusion of the Danish, and of course the spoken language in the rural districts was the Old Norse.

During the latter part of the seventeenth, and including the eighteenth century, Norway produced at least three names that are famous in literature. The first one of these three, Petter Dass, the parish priest of Alstahaug, in Nordland, was my favorite author when I was about eight or nine years of age. I never grew tired of reading his poems in " Nordland's Trompet," several of which I can quote yet. In these bright and humorous poems he glorified the natural beauty and life of the cold and dark Northland. But he did not confine

himself to the beauties of nature. He wrote extensively on religious subjects for the instruction of his parishioners including poetical versions of Luther's Catechism, and of various books of the Old Testament and the Apocrypha. This was a splendid method for giving religious instructions, as his poetry had a very easy rhythm, and it was much easier to remember than the prose. His writings had a widespread popularity, and the ignorant people circulated any number of stories about this wonderful man who according to their belief knew everything, even the black art. He died in 1708.

The second one of these three great poets, Ludwig Holberg, a native of Bergen, Norway, lived in the eighteenth century. As a famous dramatist, having written more than a score of plays, he is immortal. He is the "Molière of the North" of whom it has been well said, that "Ludwig Holberg incorporated

Denmark and Norway with contemporary Europe, and left to the twin nations as an imperishable inheritance a modern literature, a modern stage, and a modern prose."

My father told me, when I was young, how small, boyish, and insignificant Holberg looked, even after he had graduated from the university. On one of his many journeys in England when he entered into the discussion at a certain meeting, one of the company asked of him contemptuously, "When did you run away from school, my little boy?" But Holberg bombarded him in Latin until the man was unable to answer. Latin was considered the language of the educated class in those days, and when Holberg arrived in Denmark he says that they always wrote Latin, spoke French to their wives, German to their dogs, but Danish to their servants only. This and many other foolish customs he managed to eradicate.

Although a Norwegian by birth he lived and wrote in Denmark, and out of the uncultivated Danish tongue he created a rich and ingenious literary language.

The third literary light in this period was the patriotic Bishop of Bergen, Johan Nordahl Brun, born 1745, and died in 1816. He wrote, among other things, one of Norway's most stirring patriotic songs, "For Norway Heroes' Fatherland." This and Björnson's modern song, "Yes, We Love This Land," are the two great National Anthems of Norway.

We now come to the great literary awakening in Norway. This came as a result of Norway's separation from the four hundred years of union with Denmark, May 17th, 1814. At this time two brilliant poets became leaders of two opposing parties, Henrik Wergeland, the son of a clergyman and patriot, who was one of the framers of Norway's constitu-

tion in 1814. Henrik, the great poet, used to say that he was six years older than the constitution. Henrik Wergeland, a great democratic patriot, became the hero of the common people, and in prose and poetry he expressed the longings of a recovered national life.

Christian Brinchmann has written of Wergeland that he "rushed into Life, intoxicated with ecstasy over its fulness, a youth more light of heart than the lightest-hearted, and yet of a deep and manly intellect, to whom existence revealed its seriousness and its claim to the devotion of the whole personality. Wergeland glorified the struggle for liberty in poetic cycles, lashed his adversaries with wild forces, blamed the authorities with tempestuous eloquence for their weak national feeling, and ardently incited his countrymen to free themselves entirely from the traditions that still maintained, through their civil servants, the old dependence on Danish culture." Werge-

land was a prolific writer. His largest work was a drama entitled "The Creation, Mankind and the Messiah."

Welhaven, the leader of the other party, possessed a finer æsthetic sense than Wergeland and he disliked the tone of this "Seventeenth of May poetry" and the national enthusiasm. That Wergeland should be connected with such crude literary products offended Welhaven's critical faculty.

In 1834 he published a series of sonnets called "Norway's Dawn." In these he set himself directly in opposition to the popular sentiment, as manifested in the nationalistic "Seventeenth of May poetry."

A warfare with the pen was now openly declared between Wergeland and Welhaven, and it even led to personal conflicts between their supporters. Outside of this pen war, Wergeland, in his two spirited pleadings, "The Jew" and "The Jewess," did much to procure liberty for

the Jews who were prohibited by law from settling in Norway. In Christiania, on the tomb of this famous poet is to be seen a beautiful monument with the following inscription: "Thankful Jews erected this monument for Henrik Wergeland."

Amid the mourning of an entire nation he passed quietly away at the early age of thirty-eight (July 12, 1845). Wergeland was the big-hearted, beloved poet of Norway.

One of the many stories which my father told me of Wergeland I must relate. Wergeland was so sympathetic and good-hearted that he used to give away his clothes, and his mother was obliged to put under lock even the bedclothing not in use, otherwise Henrik would give it away. One day, Henrik's father, a minister of the gospel, had refused to confirm a boy who was so old that he was really a young man. Thus to fail in the confirmation class one year after another was

considered the greatest disgrace. Consequently the big boy came along the road crying. Henrik, a boy about ten years of age, went and asked the cause of his trouble. Having learned this, he said to the poor student, "Do not cry; come back here to-morrow noon, and I will get Father to pass you." At the appointed hour they met and Henrik gave him a basket in which was a goose. Geese were scarce in that part of the country and Henrik knew that his father was very fond of the only bird of this kind in their possession. As he gave the basket to the young man Henrik said, "Bring this to Father and tell him that you will present him with this goose providing he will let you pass. State also that from now on until confirmation day you will read diligently early and late."

At first the pastor was not willing, but having received the promise that the boy would study hard, the clergyman accepted the gift. With great joy he went to the

parsonage and showed it to his wife, stating that now his former goose would have a companion. Finally he handed the basket to Henrik and asked him to take this goose out to the other one. When the boy returned, his father said, "Did they fight?" "No," said Henrik, "she did not." This peculiar answer caused the Reverend to go out and see what had happened, and finding only one goose, he understood at once the whole connection. He went in and asked Henrik, "Why did you do that?" "I thought it would be amusing to see if a goose could confirm a boy," answered Henrik.

This Henrik Arnold Wergeland, as Björnson has remarked, became "the bright tutelary spirit of the new Norwegian poetry. He dreamed all the dreams of our young liberty."

Welhaven lived nearly thirty years longer than Wergeland, but he did not add very much to what he had already written.

Of Welhaven, Mr. Edmund Gosse writes: "His mission seems to have been like Lessing in Germany and Heiberg in Denmark, to revolutionize the world of taste, and to institute a new great school of letters, less by the production of fine works of art from himself than by the introduction of sound canons of criticism for the use of others."

Our school readers contained many interesting pieces by two other authors from this period, namely, Asbjörnsen and Jörgen Moe. They brought to light the wealth of material in form of folk-lore and fairy-tales. These had been preserved only by word of mouth among the peasants, but these authors transformed them into classics. Samples of these will be found in this book under the chapter of "Popular Superstitions and Fairy Tales." Moe, who became Bishop of Christiania, wrote also some of the most beautiful and touching lyrics in our language. But if you want to read something fascinating and

realistic concerning peasant life in Norway, then you can procure fine English translations of Björnstjerne Björnson's books, "Synnöve Solbakken," "Arne," "The Happy Boy," and the "Fisher Maiden," and many others. As a boy I used to lie awake nights and read these enchanting romances, which picture the life of the people in a wholesome sunny optimism. Björnson, the son of a parish priest, was born in 1832 at Kvikne, but soon his parents moved to the beautiful Romsdalen. Here the romantic and picturesque natural surroundings made a deep impression on the receptive boy, and this is again reflected in the freshness and charm with which he so faithfully reproduces the life of the Norse peasant. Besides many dramas, which have been translated and played in most European countries, Björnson has written a great number of excellent lyric poems. Among these is Norway's National Anthem, "Yes, we fondly love this country."

The influence of Björnson upon the life and thought of his countrymen has been great. He participated in all the social and political conflicts in the country and he was an excellent orator. Never shall I forget this powerful, majestic person, as he ascended the speaker's platform and with a magnetic, powerful voice, forceful language and elegant rhetoric delivered a Seventeenth of May address in Christiania. I also had the pleasure of visiting his country place, Aulestad, in Gausdal. Of Björnson's beautiful home life, Mr. William E. Curtis writes:

"At his country place he receives many visitors and gives friends and strangers a uniform welcome. They take him as he is, without formality or ceremony, and whether his guest is a prince or a peasant there is no difference in the form of entertainment or the heartiness of his hospitality. Björnson's great heart is so comprehensive that it admits every one to its embrace. Although he had a large income from his books and lectures, he had

never been able to accumulate money, while Ibsen, whose revenues have not been so great, was a rich man. Whatever Björnson has not wasted on his farm he has given to the poor or lost through his confidence in humanity."

Even his most distinguished visitors were forbidden to smoke anywhere around the main building; they were told to go to the "Pig-Pen," a small house built for smoking. Björnson did much for the establishment of the splendid National Theatre in Christiania, of which his son, Björn, was for some time an excellent manager. Outside the theatre are the statues of Björnson and Ibsen.

Henrik Ibsen, the father of the modern drama, was born in Skien, Norway, 1828.

Probably no modern author has been more abused both in his own country and in foreign lands. This was principally because they did not understand him.

Ibsen has created the most realistic psychological characters, and when he, as

a surgeon of souls, comes with the knife and hot iron to cut and cauterize the vices of these characters, the audience felt that they were unmercifully cut and burned.

In England, William Archer collected a whole volume of the nasty criticisms on Ibsen's dramas, and he calls it "Ibsen's Epitaph." But to-day Ibsen is more alive, played more, and understood better in England than ever before. In his dramas Ibsen wages war against such wrongs as hypocrisy, stagnation in mediocrity and mere tradition, the passion for petty criticism, the labor question, the emancipation of women, the peace question, and the need of awakened responsibility among all classes of society.

Mr. W. S. Monroe says, "Certainly the picture that he paints of the moral forces operating in Norway is anything but lovely; but it would probably be as unfair to accept Ibsen's 'Peer Gynt' as typical of Norse peasant life as to regard Zola's 'La Terre' as representative of

life in the French provinces. Ibsen is not merely a pessimist and satirist, but a social reformer who deals with living truths."

The literary activity of Ibsen has been divided by Professor John Storm into three periods:

(1) That of his historical dramas from 1850 to 1873, the earlier ones, such as "Catilina" and "Lady Inger of Ostraad," etc., being in verse, and the later and more mature ones, such as "Rivals for the Throne" and "Emperor and Galelian" (a drama of the Emperor Julian), being in prose.

(2) The period of the rhyming satirical up-to-date dramas, such as "Love's Comedy," 1862, "Brand" and "Peer Gynt," and various poems, 1871, and

(3) The period of his modern prose dramas such as "The Pillars of Society," 1877, "A Doll's House," 1879, and many others.

Ibsen's daring satire aroused much

controversy and was fiercely attacked, but the seed which he sowed has borne good fruit in the lives of many, who are grateful to the man that pointed out truths which had been long overlooked.

Ibsen wrote most of his works in Italy and Germany; but in 1891 he finally returned, making Christiania his home, with only occasional visits to Germany.

Ibsen's twenty-one dramas have been published in America by Scribner's in eleven volumes, and they show his large grasp of deep psychological problems and his mastery of the resources of the stage. A great deal of light is thrown on the man himself. First, by the publication in 1898 of a volume of "Appreciations" of the poet by a number of eminent men. The occasion was his seventieth birthday, and his friends combined to do him honor. Secondly, in Mr. John Paulsen's "Samliv med Ibsen." This author is for Ibsen what Boswell was for Samuel Johnson.

Holdane Mac Fall says of Ibsen:

"Like the old sea-dogs of whom he came, and they left their mark upon his features and his soul, he was a stubborn fighter. Peace he held as not the most desirable condition; the warfare of strenuous living was the more healthy for man. His eyes were the watchful eyes of the sailor folk, at constant guard for the threat of danger that may leap forth on every hand, out of the summer sky above, or calm waters beneath, or from out the seething hell of the black, bewildering tempest, ever ready for war with the elements without. So did he keep watch against the elements of weaknesses within."

In his home in Christiania, May 23, 1906, Ibsen passed away. He was followed to the grave by a vast concourse headed by King Haakon VII. He was laid in his last resting place with every mark of respect that could be shown to one who had exercised such an important influence on the life and thought of his country.

Foremost among the other authors is Jonas Lie, who in 1870 published his

novel, "The Visionary," which immediately achieved success.

Lie wrote several interesting tales, which are founded on the lives of the people in the far north of Norway, and descriptive of the seafaring life, such as "The Pilot and His Wife," "The Three-master Future," "Rutland," and "Go Ahead."

In his later writings Lie turned to novels dealing with psychological questions. In a long series of impressionistically lifelike pictures, he paints his careful observations of the life of family and society in "One of Life's Slaves," "The Gilje Family," "A Whirlpool," "The Commodore's Daughters," "A Conjugal Union," "Evil Powers," and "When the Sun Goes Down."

In reading Lie one enjoys his humor and cheerful view of life, but most of all the intelligent sympathy of a warm nature that speaks to the heart. Upon reflection one will see that little Norway has

had at least a couple of authors in each period that are really great and enjoy international reputation. First we had Peder Dass and Holberg, Wergeland, and Welhaven; then Asbjörnsen and Moe; then comes Björnson, Ibsen and Lie, and now we have Arne Garborg and Knut Hamsun.

Arne Garborg's contributions to literature are in the form of analytical studies of social and religious problems. His works, "A Freethinker" and "Peace," seem to be reactions to a narrow school of pietism which prevailed in his country home. But his later works show that he has returned to a liberal Christian attitude.

Garborg has written in the new Norse language, the "Landsmaal." This is a powerful language composed of the different dialects in the country, and containing, therefore, many old Norse roots. Other writers in this language are Jens Twedt, Rasmus Löland, and Vetle Vis-

lie. These have all penned excellent pictures of rural life.

Alexander Kjelland is an author who has a masterly way of handling the language and great skill in drawing characters. Both his novelettes and novels are excellent and enchanting. Among the best known are his "Garmann and Worse," "Skipper Worse," "Workpeople," "Else" and "Poison."

Among other writers of this period are Amalia Skram, Sigbjörn Obsfelder. Of the new dramatists Heiberg and Egge have written powerful and successful plays. The lyric writing has been revived by Nils Collett Vogt and Wilhelm Krag. Their verses show that the gift of song still lives in the North.

In connection with Garborg I have mentioned Knut Hamsun, who recently received the Nobel Prize in literature. His name and literary works are universally known and need not be mentioned here.

Space forbids us even to mention all who have made a name for themselves in Norse literature at the present time. Enough has been said, we trust, to show the wonderful way in which such a small nation has gained for itself a worthy position in the literature of Europe. Judging from Hamsun and others, we may expect in the future more giants of the Ibsen type from this Viking Land.

Those who wish fuller information concerning modern authors whose names are in the Norse literary roll may be referred to the excellent "Dictionary of Norwegian Authors," by J. B. Halvorsen.

# CHAPTER XXIII

## A WEDDING FEAST

THE engagement of a couple is, in the rural districts of Norway, announced by the minister in the church on three successive Sundays.

If the couple are wealthy, the preparations for the wedding will take many weeks. There is butchering, baking, sewing, and brewing of home-made ale,—and everything must be on a large scale, for the wedding feast is to last at least one week—when from two to three hundred guests have nothing to do but to eat, drink, and be merry.

Finally, the date for the wedding is set and the invitations are given orally by one who is a smooth speaker, worthy and well qualified for this important office.

The ancient custom was for the whole

bridal procession to ride to church. This procession was very picturesque, with the ladies in national costume, consisting of a dress of bright colors, neatly woven into the cloth, white aprons, red bodices outside of a white embroidered linen waist and large white bonnets on their heads. The men wore knickerbocker trousers with small silver buttons and a silver buckle on the side, white socks, low shoes with silver buckles and a small red stocking cap.

The fiddlers would ride in front of the procession, then came the bride and bridegroom, the master of ceremony, etc. Along the road to the church their friends would greet them by firing of guns. This was not altogether without danger, as some of the horses would get scared and the ladies would find it difficult to control them.

The most conspicuous person of all is, of course, the bride. On her head she wears a crown of silver and gold. This

is very expensive, and the poorer people are obliged to rent it for the occasion. It is also very heavy, and it has happened, especially if it were hot weather and if the minister were long-winded, that the bride would faint during the sermon in the church. Her gown is rich and elaborately decorated with many colors—red and green predominating—and several lady attendants are very busily engaged in seeing that the crown and the bride's other paraphernalia are in proper order.

Arriving home from the church, the company is met by the master of ceremonies and a couple of attendants, who offer every guest a fancy-carved and bright-colored bowl containing home-brewed ale. Then they all enter a large room where the bride and groom greet every one in a most graceful manner.

Soon the big feast is ready and all line up for an "out-of-door wedding march." This gives the master of ceremonies the opportunity to line them up just in the

order they are to be seated at the tables. The fiddlers take the lead, playing lively. The bride and bridegroom follow, and behind them come the merry guests in couples. Now they are ready to partake of the appetizing dishes of the feast. These consist of cream porridge, rice pudding, meats—hot and cold,—potatoes boiled; fish of several kinds; three kinds of bread; biscuits; salmon; several kinds of cheese; pickles; pudding; several kinds of small, dainty cakes; home-brewed ale —and (in former days) wine and brandy.

It is understood that the guests at such celebrations are to eat, drink, and enjoy themselves.

Each guest would also bring a present in form of some kind of food.

After the *repast,* the merrymakers "step lively" to the national dances of Halling and Spring-dance.

# CHAPTER XXIV

## A CRUISE AROUND THE COAST OF NORWAY TO NORTH CAPE AND THE MIDNIGHT SUN

In 1890 I went on a cruise around the coast of Norway. For uniqueness, interest, and impressive beauty, this trip cannot be duplicated elsewhere in the whole world.

Our starting-point was Christiania, and our jolly company of students and athletes increased constantly, as we stopped at most of the cities around the coast and took on board the fraternities of students, athletes and singers.

Most of us were youngsters, with no "better half" to occupy our attention, hence we had ample time for sports and for viewing the beauty of the romantic and shifting scenery.

To our right, this scenery consists of the mainland, with its grand panorama of varied landscape, fjords, mountains, and

cities; and to our left, 150,000 small and large islands form a perfect breakwater, and thus afford us a perfectly calm and pleasant cruise with the water as smooth as a lake.

Space will, unfortunately, simply permit us to mention a few of the lovely and grand sights which we enjoyed on this never-to-be-forgotten voyage.

From Christiania to Trondhjem, landings were often made, and we visited some of the most beautiful fjords and sounds, besides many historic places, towns and remarkable natural phenomena.

In the bright and beautiful city of Trondhjem, the streets are almost as thronged with people at midnight as at midday. From this place we start on a June evening for a week's cruise in continual daylight.

Friends, from whom we are taking leave for a while, wish us "bon voyage" as they wave to us from the shore.

The mountains are clothed in royal

purple, and the glorious radiance of the last sunset which we shall see for a week is casting a rosy glow over the picturesque old city and the fortified island of Munkholmen, which played such a prominent part in the early history of Trondhjem. During our passage between the islands and the mainland we feast our eyes on the brilliant colors of cloud-rack, land and sea.

A brief halt is made off the fishing village of Brönö, which presents a busy scene when the herring fleets are fishing in the neighboring waters. Here we send letters to friends by "bottle post." They are thrown overboard in a sealed bottle and picked up by boatmen from the village.

### *The Horseman, the Seven Sisters, and the Torg's Hat*

The mythical history of these wonderful rock formations may be briefly condensed from the fuller story:

"A younger brother of a cousin of the Devil went, we are told, on a visit to his seven sisters, now represented by the grand mountain peaks on the island of Alsten. On his way he met the maiden of Lekö, with whom he fell in love, but who did not respond to his advances. Wild with rage, he—the Horseman—fitted an arrow to his bow to slay her; but at the moment when he discharged it a favored lover, who arrived opportunely on the scene, threw his hat into the path of the arrow, which passed through it and buried itself in the ground. This happened, apparently, just before daybreak, for we are told that a moment later the sun rose and the whole company—Devil's cousin, sisters, maiden of Lekö, and favored lover—were turned into stone. The petrified form of the maiden may be seen on her native island unto this day. The arrow stands on one of the islands passed by our steamer. Torg's hat (Torghatten), with the hole in it, is plainly in evi-

dence, the Horseman is still mounted on his bony steed, and the seven sisters still stand as a memorial of the doleful tragedy."

### *The Famous Svartisen*

is an enormous glacier, covering a plateau nearly 4,000 feet above sea level. For hours its gleaming ice-field has presented a magnificent spectacle to us, and now, after a hot day on board the steamer, we can spend the evening in visiting this majestic glacier. It is beautiful with its clear, blue surface and sea-green ice caverns. When we return to the quay we find a little group of demure peasant girls awaiting us with bunches of wild flowers gathered from the banks of the glacial stream. They do not ask us to buy them, but stand in a row, silent, holding the flowers in their hands. In spite of their lack of commercial enterprise, they soon dispose of them at the rate of ten or twenty-five öre a bunch, each little girl

making a nice curtsey when the coin is put in her hand.

### *The Vest Fjord and Beautiful Nordland*

Du Chaillu remarks that the scenery of the Nordland shores is the wildest on the coast of Norway, and we see it at its wildest and grandest between Bodö and Tromsö. There are fine views of glaciers, also of snow-clad peaks and steep mountainsides from which avalanches descend; yet at the foot of these barren heights there are woods and pleasant pastures.

### *An Idyllic Land*

"Undoubtedly the most graphic descriptions of Nordland and Nordland life are those of Jonas Lie, the famous Norwegian novelist, who spent the most impressionable years of his life in and around Tromsö, where his father held the post of Sheriff. 'If there is a home for a wonderfully beautiful idyll,' he writes, 'it must be in the fjord-villages of Nord-

land in the summer-time. It is as though the sun kisses Nature all the more lovingly because he knows how short a time they have to be together, and as if they both, for a time, try to forget that they must part so soon. Then the hill grows green as if by a sudden miracle, and the bluebell, the dandelion, the buttercup, the dog-daisy, the wild rose, the raspberry, and the strawberry spring up in lavish abundance by every brook, on every hillock, on every mountain slope; then hundreds of insects hum in the grass as in a tropical land; then cows, horses, and sheep are driven up the hills and the mountainsides, while the Finn from the highlands comes down into the valley with his reindeer and waters them in the river; then the cloudberry moors lie reddening for many a mile inland; then there is quiet, sunny peace in every cottage, where the fisherman is now sitting at home with his family, putting his tackle in order for the winter fishing; for in Nordland the

summer is more beautful than in any other place, and there is an idyllic gladness and peace over Nature, which is to be found nowhere else.' Well might Fridtjof Nansen, when his good ship *Fram,* on her way to the Polar seas, passed along the coast of Nordland, say, 'It is unique —a fairyland—a land of dreams. We felt afraid to go on too fast—for fear of missing something.'"

We make a short stop at the bright and pleasant little town of Tromsö, located on an island by the same name.

### *The Lure of the Arctic*

As we linger on deck after midnight and gaze upon this wonderful scene, we understand as never before how great is the lure of the Frozen North to explorers and navigators who have once ventured into the icy realms of the Arctic Ocean. Nothing could be more alluring, although phantasmal, than the apparently inaccessible peaks floating, as it were, high above

the sea and mist, yet motionless against a sky bright with the glorious midnight light.

### *The Northernmost Town in the World*

This is Hammerfest, where the sun does not set from May 13 to July 29, nor rise from November 20 to January 21.

During the dark days the town is lighted by electricity, and it possesses an excellent telephone service.

Ships of all nations frequent its harbors, which are never closed by ice, due to the influence of the Gulf Stream. It is a busy place from which fishing fleets are sent to the Polar seas.

### *The Bird Rock*

"We leave Hammerfest after lunch, and during the afternoon the yacht stops under the towering bird cliff of Hjelmsöstauren, the ledges of which are lined with hundreds of thousands of rock birds that nest there. Hjelmsöstauren is one of the

most famous bird rocks in the world, and as we watch the flight and listen to the wild cries of its immense flocks of guillemots, puffins and gulls, we gain some idea of the wonderful and extraordinarily abundant bird life of the Arctic Ocean. The face of the rock is almost covered with them, the air is filled with them, and thousands are swimming around the yacht. When a gun is fired the sky is darkened by the clouds of birds that rise from the ledges, and yet there is no appreciable diminution of the numbers remaining apparently undisturbed on the rock. We are told that only the young birds are alarmed by the report of a gun. The old birds, having become accustomed to the sound—for every cruising yacht discharges a gun here in order that its passengers may see the birds take flight—usually remain on their nests."

### *The Lyngen Fjord*

An Englishman says that even if Nor-

way had nothing else in the way of natural scenery to attract strangers to its shores, it would be well worth while to make a far longer voyage than that from England in order to see the austere magnificence and marvelous color of the Lyngen Fjord.

### *Lapps and Reindeer*

Here we visit a Lapp camp. This race is typically Mongolian. They have a yellowish complexion, high cheek bones, low foreheads, full lips, narrow eyes, and broad, blunt noses. They often live to a great age, and in this encampment there are ancient, wrinkled, pipe-smoking dames between ninety and a hundred years old. Some of these ancient crones still have a reputation for skill in magic and witchcraft.

### *The Lofoten Islands and Their Fishery*

"The Lofoten Islands, which we have now approached, have been aptly de-

scribed as a chain of mountains cleft by countless creeks and straits. They lie within the Arctic Circle, and are separated from the mainland of Norway by the great Vest Fjord and some narrow channels. There are four large islands and a number of smaller ones flanked by thousands of rocky islets. Although lying within the same lines of latitude as Greenland and Siberia, they enjoy a comparatively mild climate, and their harbors are not frozen even during the severest winters. All the islands are mountainous, with crater-like granite peaks or Alpine summits, and much of their scenery is grand. Most of the larger islands are inhabited by fishermen, who, from January to April, carry on, in the Vest Fjord, the famous Lofoten fishery, the waters of the fjord being then perceptibly darkened by the presence of immense shoals of cod, which come in from the depths of the Atlantic to spawn on banks near the Nordland coast. Several thousand boats are

engaged in this great fishery. When the fish are brought ashore they are opened and cleaned, men, women and children taking part in the work. They are known as 'klipfisk' (split fish), and are spread on the rocks to dry, afterwards being piled in stacks along the shore under wooden covers known as 'hats.' Some are fastened by pegs to long rods and allowed to dry in the wind until they have the consistency of leather. These are called stock-fish. Shortly before summer most of the season's catch is taken to Bergen, and from thence exported to Spain, Italy, and other countries. Most of the cods' heads are dried by fire and made into fish guano, but on some of the outlying islands they are boiled with seaweed and used to feed cattle. From the livers cod-liver oil is made. Along the low rocks of the Lofotens and of the Nordland and Finmarken coasts the great cauldrons in which the livers are slowly stewed can easily be seen."

### *The Monstrous Kraken*

This is a "sea-beast" like the Leviathan. Bishop Pontoppidan, who published a "Natural History of Norway" in 1751, describes this monster as being the largest creature in the world. The kraken, according to the Bishop, had a back that, when it rose from the depths of the sea, formed an island about a mile and a half in circumference, and for an island it was often mistaken by inexperienced mariners who landed on it without realizing their danger. "So long as they were content with walking on it, the kraken seems to have let them do so in safety; but if they subjected it to any such indignity as lighting a fire on it or digging a hole in it, they either found themselves struggling in the sea or seized by long, tree-like tentacles, strong enough to drag a ship down into the depths of the ocean, the waves meanwhile being stained with a dark fluid ejected by the monster in its rage."

### *The Mythical Maelström*

The fact upon which the mythical stories of the Maelström seems to be based is a simple one. "Owing to the masses of water forced by the tides through the narrow sounds between the Lofoten Islands, the current sometimes becomes very strong, and is at its strongest off the island of Moskenes, where, according to Du Chaillu, it runs in winter 'in strong whirls, and with the speed of twenty-six miles an hour.' A like phenomenon may also be witnessed at the entrance of the Salten Fjord, on the east side of the Vest Fjord."

### *The North Cape*

The northernmost point of Norway is a rocky headland on Magerö Island—the end of all things, rising a thousand feet above the deep, blue Arctic sea. The climb up the steep, zigzag pathway from the spot where the steamer lands you, is arduous, and we were glad of the aid af-

forced by ropes secured to iron stanchions beside the path. The top is a bare and wind-swept tableland strewn with small sandstone, mica slate, and quartz. There is a wooden hut and from a flagstaff near it floats the Norwegian flag. The only liquid refreshments obtainable here are champagne and lemonade. We were astonished to find that in spite of the difficulties of transportation, souvenirs and refreshments offered for sale here cost no more than in Christiania or Trondhjem. Here, facing the North Pole, is the red granite column which commemorates the visit of the late King Oscar II to the island in 1871. At midnight, we all assemble on the edge of the steep and lofty cliff, and from this fine vantage-point, over a thousand feet above the sea, we gaze across the Arctic Ocean at the midnight sun.

*The Midnight Sun,* as described by Du Chaillu:

"The brilliancy of the splendid orb varies in intensity, like that of sunset and sunrise, according to the state of moisture of the atmosphere. One day it will be of a deep red color, tingeing everything with a roseate hue, and producing a drowsy effect. There are times when the changes in the color between the sunset and sunrise might be compared to the variations of a charcoal fire, now burning with a fierce red glow, then fading away, and rekindling with greater brightness.

"There are days when the sun has a pale, whitish appearance, and when even it can be looked at for six or seven hours before midnight. As this hour approaches, the sun becomes less glaring, gradually changing into more brilliant shades as it dips toward the lowest point of its course. Its motion is very slow, and for quite a while it apparently follows the line of the horizon, during which there seems to be a pause, as when the sun reaches noon. This is midnight. For a few minutes the glow of sunset mingles with that of sunrise, and one cannot tell which prevails; but soon the light becomes slowly and gradually more brilliant, announcing the birth of another day, and often before an hour has elapsed the sun

becomes so dazzling that one cannot look at it with the naked eye."

Another evening we saw the Aurora Borealis, or the Northern Light, as it came straight from the Arctic Sea, "stealing o'er the waters like a benediction." Of all natural phenomena, this is one of the most striking. Especially in the northern part of Norway, where its full glory is revealed. The site of the appearance, in the north part of the heavens, and its close resemblance to the aspect of the sky before sunrise, have originated the name. It appears as an opalescent radiance born of twilight and of dawn. Sometimes it forms in the zenith, in a shape resembling that of an umbrella, pouring down streams of light from all parts of its periphery, which falls vertically over the hemisphere in every direction. It is a marvel of magnificence, a unique and never-to-be-forgotten scene.

THE END

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